

# Seasonal Food Surveillance — Lap-mei (First Phase)



Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

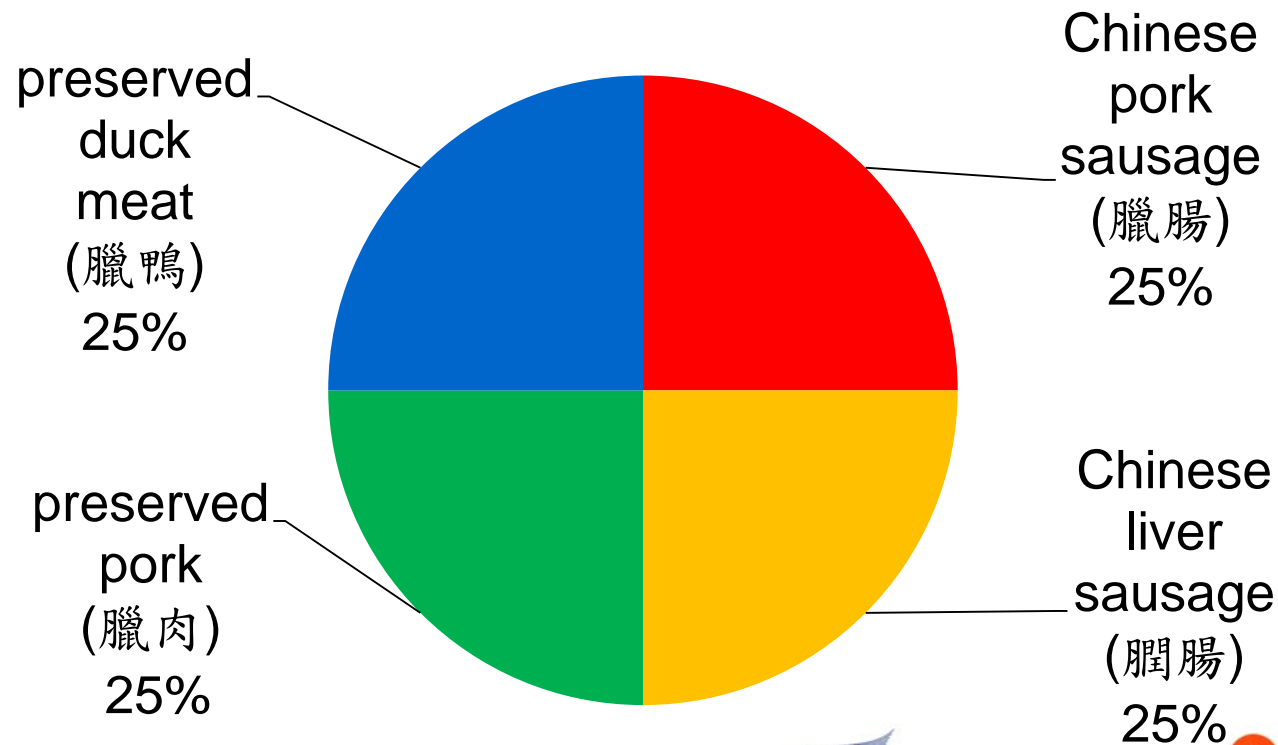
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# Background

- 'Lap-mei' (Chinese preserved meat) is getting popular with the approach of winter.
- Typical curing ingredients in the preparation of Lap-mei include salt, nitrate and nitrite, sugar, and wine. Other food additives such as sulphur dioxide, colouring matters and antioxidants may also be used.
- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) recently conducted a seasonal food surveillance project on Lap-mei. The objective was to provide information on the safety of Lap-mei to consumers and the trade in a timely manner.

# Types of food samples

- The CFS collected 40 food samples from supermarkets, dried seafood stalls, grocery and market stalls for testing. Samples comprised:



# Types of analysis & results

- Tests covered
  - Preservatives (e.g. sulphur dioxide, Nitrate and nitrite)
  - Colouring matters
  - Antioxidants
- All results were satisfactory.



# Follow-up actions

- Although all the samples tested were satisfactory, CFS will continue surveillance on Lap-mei, and the report on second phase will be released timely.



# Advices for the trade

- Should comply with the legal requirements and follow Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP). They should use permitted food additives only in an appropriate manner.
- Retailers should source food from reliable suppliers. Conduct quality audit to incoming materials and end products to ensure that ingredients used are within legal standards.
- The trade should maintain a good recording system in accordance with the Food Safety Ordinance to allow source tracing if needed.

# Advice for consumers

- Lap-mei, despite its nitrate/nitrite level and potential risk of nitrosamine, its relatively higher sodium, sugar and fat content is sufficient to call for a moderation in its intake for individuals especially for those with diabetes, heart disease and high cholesterol.
- Besides, infants are highly susceptible to the nitrite toxicity and should be avoided consuming Lap-mei. As for young children, their intake of Lap-mei should also be restricted.
- Nevertheless, the public is highly recommended to maintain a balanced diet in order to safeguard their health.