

# Targeted Food Surveillance on Microbiological Quality of Bottled Water

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

October 2011

# Background

- Bottled water is frequently consumed by most people. There are various brands and different bottle volumes of bottled water available in the market. The hygienic situation of these products is of public concern.
- In view of this, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) has conducted a targeted surveillance since last year to assess the microbiological quality of various kinds of bottled water.



# Types of samples

- The CFS collected 60 samples from different locations including supermarkets, convenient stores, groceries, department stores and food factories, etc from August to September this year.
- The following bottled samples from local and overseas production plants were covered in this project:
  - Natural mineral water
  - Bottled drinking water (e.g. distilled water & artificial mineralized water)
- Samples also covered products of different bottle volumes, including carboys of water for water dispenser.

# Types of tests and results

- The examinations conducted included indicators of microbiological quality such as *E.Coli* and total coliform bacteria.
- All results were satisfactory.



# Advice for the trade

- Ensure the products are fit for consumption and meet the microbiological criteria of the “Microbiological Guidelines for Ready-to-eat Food”.
- Source bottled water, which is of satisfactory hygienic quality, from reliable production plants.
- Bottled water manufacturers should maintain good environmental hygiene of the production plants, transport vehicles and warehouses. They should observe good hygienic practices along all processes of production, transport and storage.

# Advice for consumers

- Buy bottled water from reliable shops.
- Check the expiry date and packing of bottled water. Do not buy and consume any bottled water which is
  - ❑ beyond expiry date, or
  - ❑ not sealed properly or with damaged package.
- Drink the bottled water as soon as possible after it is opened.

# Advice for consumers (Cont'd)

- For people with lower immunity,
  - should choose bottled water undergone treatment process, for instance, distillation or reverse osmosis. They should consume drinking water or carboy of water for water dispenser which has been boiled.
  - should seek advice from medical professional if necessary.
- For people taking care of infant, they should note that
  - water from the water dispenser should also be boiled for preparing infant formula. The temperature of water used for preparation should not be lower than 70°C.
  - reconstituted powdered infant formula should be then cooled to feeding temperature and consumed immediately.
  - mineral water is not suitable for preparing infant formula.