
Targeted Food Surveillance on Microbiological Quality of Chinese Cold Dishes

Centre for Food Safety

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Background

- In Hong Kong, the world's gourmet paradise, various Chinese regional cuisines are available. Local Chinese food premises usually offer a wide variety of cold and hot dishes for consumers.
- Chinese cold dishes can be prepared in different ways and manual handling is usually involved in the preparation steps. Being cold dishes, they may be prepared in advance and stored for a period of time before serving and they are not usually reheated before consumption. These factors may affect the hygienic quality of the products.
- As such, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) has conducted a targeted food surveillance project recently to assess the microbiological quality of Chinese cold dishes.



Types of tests and results

- The CFS collected 200 samples from different locations including food premises, food factories, supermarkets and convenient stores for testing pathogens from July to August this year:
 - *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*
 - *Salmonella*
 - *Staphylococcus aureus*
 - *Clostridium perfringens*
 - *Bacillus cereus*
- All sample results were satisfactory.



Advice for the trade

- Estimate the demand of each dish carefully to avoid over-production.
- Plan the production schedule ahead to avoid preparing food too far in advance.
- Purchase food ingredients from reliable sources.



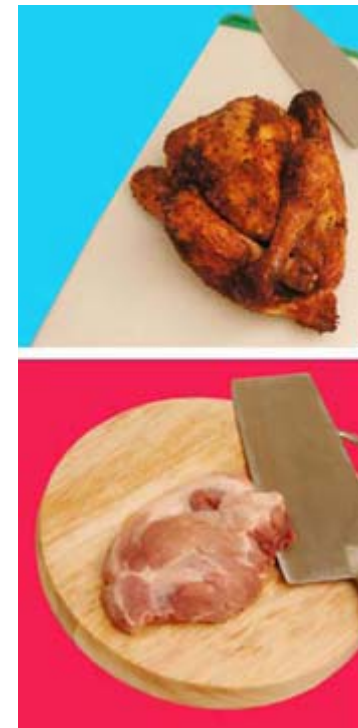
Advice for the trade (Cont'd)

- Keep ready-to-eat dishes in covered containers and away from raw food, in the upper compartment if stored in the same refrigerator, with temperature at 4°C or below.



Advice for the trade (Cont'd)

- Use separate utensils and to handle raw food and cooked food or ready-to-eat food in different areas.



Advice for the trade (Cont'd)

- Food handlers should follow good personal hygiene practices, including:
 - wash hands thoroughly with running water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling foods, often during food preparation and after going to the toilet
 - wear clean and light-coloured outer clothing or protective overalls



Advice for the trade (Cont'd)

- ❑ refrain from smoking and eating during preparation
- ❑ open wound should be covered by bright-coloured waterproof bandages or gloves
- ❑ suspend from engaging in any food handling work when suffering or suspected to be suffering from an infectious disease or symptoms of illness such as flu, diarrhea, vomiting, fever, sore throat and abdominal pain



Advice for consumers



- Patronise reliable and licensed food premises.
- Consume Chinese cold dishes as soon as possible.
- If products are not consumed immediately, keep them in the fridge at or below 4°C.