
Targeted Food Surveillance —
**Microbiological quality of refrigerated
pre-packaged boxed meal that required
reheating before consumption**

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

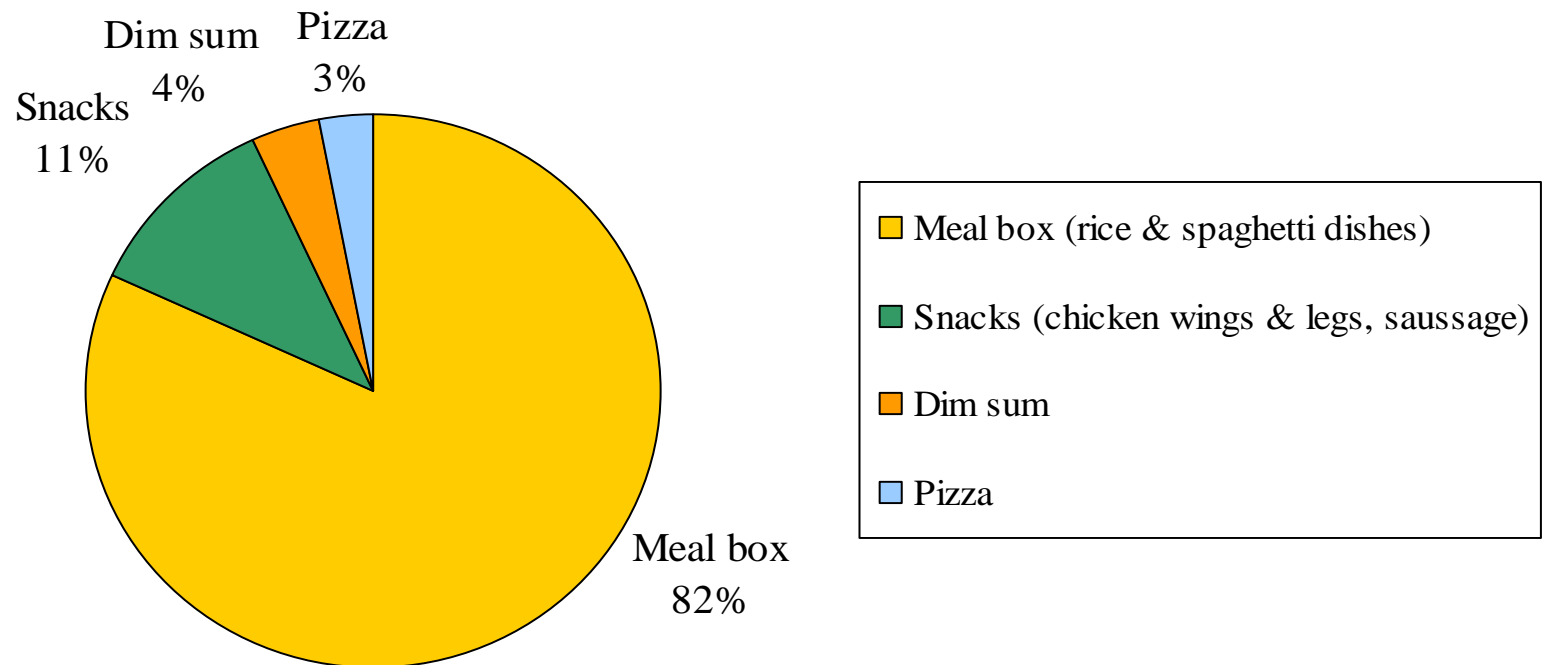
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Background

- Refrigerated pre-packaged boxed meal that require reheating before consumption are very popular in Hong Kong. Both reheating instructions and the hygienic condition of food processing have direct influence on the microbiological quality of these foods.
- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) has conducted a targeted food surveillance regularly since 2008 to assess the microbiological quality of these foods after reheated according to the package instructions.

Types of samples

- The CFS collected 200 samples of prepackaged food that required reheating before consumption for testing from April to May this year.



Types of test and result

- All samples were tested for pathogens:
 - *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*
 - *Salmonella*
 - *Staphylococcus aureus*
 - *Clostridium perfringens*
 - *Bacillus cereus*
- All sample results were satisfactory.

Advice for trade

- Avoid preparing food too far in advance.
- Cook food thoroughly.
- Keep hot foods at above 60 °C, chilled foods at 4 °C or below and frozen food at -18 °C or below.
- Food handlers should observe strict personal hygiene.

Advice for consumers

- Purchase food from hygienic and reliable shops.
- Avoid choosing food without intact packing and proper storage in refrigerator.
- Follow the package instructions to reheat the food thoroughly.
- Consume the food as soon as possible after reheating.