

# Survey on popular food items – Sashimi and sushi

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

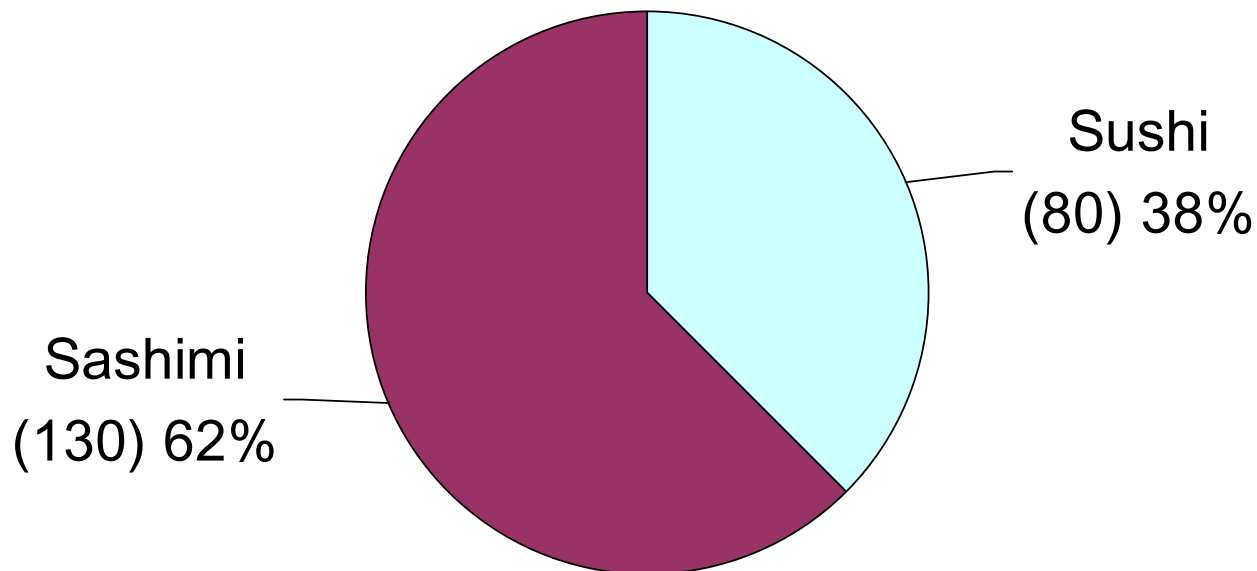
May 2012

# Background

- Sashimi and sushi are very common Japanese-style food in Hong Kong in recent years, with plenty of choices at a wide range of prices.
- As their production involve uncooked food as well as a great deal of manual handling, food safety would be hampered by faults from the choice of ingredients to their production and storage.
- In 2011, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) received notification of 60 food poisoning cases involving “sashimi and sushi”, affecting 213 persons.
- As there is concerns over related food safety, the CFS has recently conducted a project on “Sashimi and sushi” as the theme of “Survey on popular food items” to assess the safety of relevant food items.

# Types of samples tested

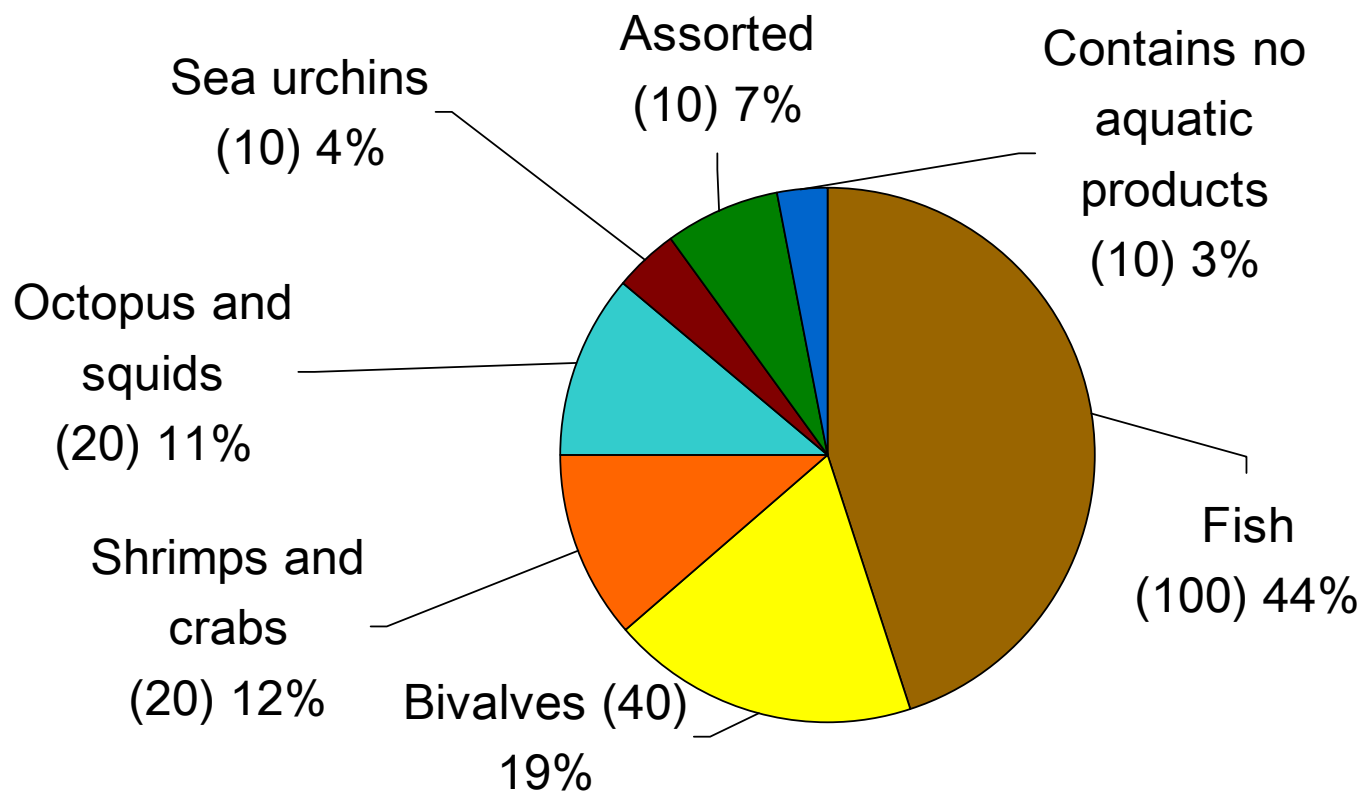
- 200 samples were taken during March and April 2012 for testing.



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded and may not add up to total due to rounding.

# Types of samples tested

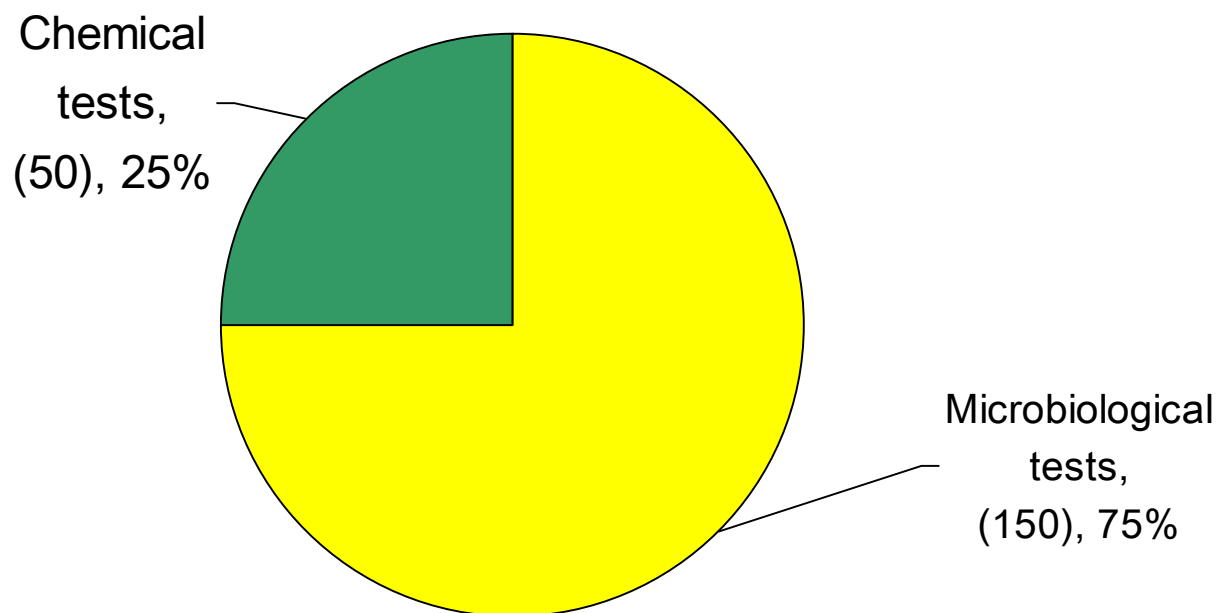
- The 200 samples were categorized into the following 7 groups.



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# Types of tests

- The 200 samples were subjected to a variety of microbiological and chemical tests.



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# Types of tests

## Microbiological tests

- It included tests of common pathogens such as *Bacillus cereus*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Salmonella*, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*.

## Chemical tests

- It covered common hazards such as, metallic contamination, veterinary drug residues and toxins.

# Overall results

- All 200 samples passed the tests.



# Advice for the trade

- Although all samples passed the tests, the trade should always comply with hygienic practices including:
  - maintaining good personal hygiene;
  - processing and storing raw food from ready-to-eat food separately to prevent cross contamination;
  - keeping food at safe temperatures (4°C or below)
- Source wholesome and good quality raw materials from reliable suppliers for the preparation of sashimi and sushi. Food that is intended for consumption after cooking should not be provided for consumption in their raw state.
- All imported food materials should be accompanied by health certificates issued by relevant authority of the exporting countries which are acceptable to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD).
- Maintain a good recording system in accordance with the Food Safety Ordinance to allow source tracing if needed.



# Advice for consumers

- Check whether the premises have a FEHD licence and the endorsement for sale of sashimi and sushi (figure on the right).
- Do not purchase food which has been improperly stored, e.g., those that are not well covered or kept under ambient temperature for prolonged period.
- Consume take-away food soon after purchase, or keep food at safe temperatures (4°C or below) to minimize risk.
- People with weakened immunity, elderly, pregnant women and young children are at higher risk for foodborne illness; they should not eat raw or partially cooked food.

