

Targeted Food Surveillance — Microbiological quality of prepackaged food that required reheating before consumption

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

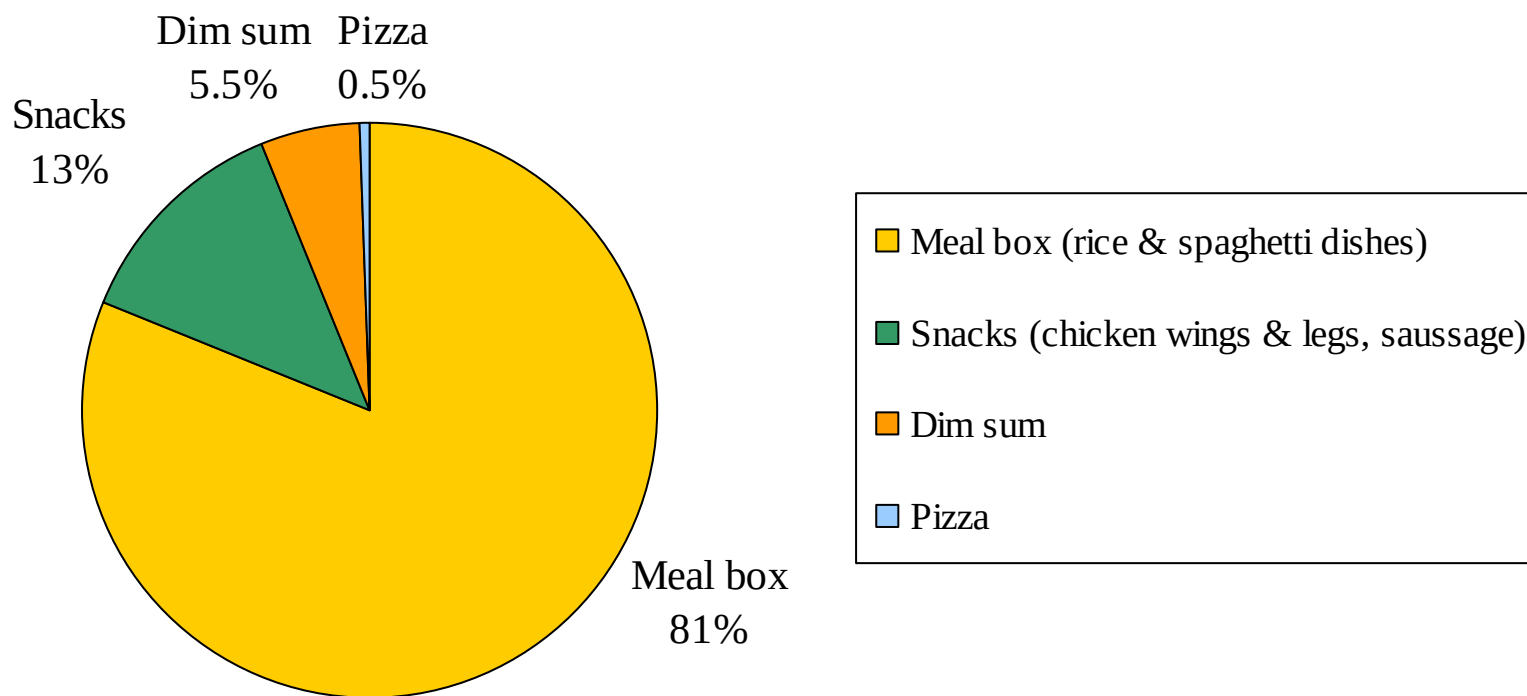
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Introduction

- ❑ Prepackaged food that required reheating before consumption are very popular in Hong Kong. They are commonly found in supermarkets and convenient stores.
- ❑ The hygienic condition of food processing and reheating instructions have direct influence on the microbiological quality of these foods.
- ❑ The Centre for Food Safety recently conducted a targeted food surveillance project to assess the microbiological quality of these foods after reheating in accordance with instructions provided in the packages.

Types of samples

- 200 samples of prepackaged foods that required reheating before consumption were collected for testing.



Types of test and result

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

Advice for trade

- Follow the “Five Keys to Food Safety” in food production to prevent food borne diseases:
 - ❑ Choose safe raw materials
 - ❑ Keep hands and utensils clean
 - ❑ Separate raw and cooked food
 - ❑ Cook thoroughly
 - ❑ Keep food at safe temperature
- Keep chilled foods at 4°C or below and frozen foods at -18°C or below.

Advice for consumers

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