

Member Survey on Online Purchase of Food

With the advance of internet technology and e-currency, online shopping has become more popular than ever. Purchasing food with applications makes modern life easier. Consumers can order different kinds of food from prepackaged foods and frozen food products to fresh produce and fruits via online shopping platforms. After a transaction has been completed, the online shop will deliver the food to a collection point or the consumer's home.

In April this year, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) conducted an online member survey to understand the public's perception, consumer attitudes and practices regarding online purchase of food.

Over 100 members responded to the survey. Respondents generally displayed a good understanding of information on food such as information including ingredient lists, shelf life and food allergens on food labels. In addition, members were able to identify food requiring freezing. However, members had varying perceptions of the concepts of freezing temperatures and the 2-hour/4-hour rule. Individual members did not have a sufficient understanding of restricted foods and high-risk foods.

In terms of consumer attitudes, most members acquired information on online purchase of food through websites of shops, social media platforms, internet channels, etc. but they were concerned that products purchased online might be of food safety concern. More than half of the respondents were worried about the holding temperatures during transportation and that food information might have been altered. They were also worried about the hygiene of logistics personnel and containers.

The survey revealed that about two-thirds of respondents had used online purchase services or had a habit of purchasing food online. For members who had experience of purchasing food online, they mostly purchased grocery items like snacks and canned food, followed by frozen meat, seafood and poultry. They usually collected the food at home after making a purchase.

When consuming food purchased online, pay attention to

the nature and potential risks associated with the food items. Susceptible populations, e.g. the elderly, young children, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems should take extra precautions. Patronise reliable licensed food premises/holders of restricted food permits, especially when buying high-risk foods such as oysters to be eaten without cooking. The CFS will also step up the promotion of food safety messages about purchasing food online.

Safe Food at School Thematic Website

Safe and nutritious food supports the growth and promotes the wellbeing of children. Therefore, ensuring food safety at schools and childcare facilities is particularly essential, as young children are more vulnerable to food poisoning (foodborne diseases). In busy places like schools and childcare centres, it is imperative that both food handlers and other staff are aware of the specific risks related to those settings. These include the mass preparation and distribution of meals, food allergens and choking hazards of food in young children.

Maintaining high food hygiene and safety standards can help to prevent food hazards and contamination and therefore, subsequent illness. People who work with food should receive appropriate food safety training. By learning about potential hazards and practising proper hygiene, food handlers, teachers and caregivers at schools and childcare facilities can prevent foodborne diseases and even threats to life.





The Safe Food at School thematic website is intended to help schools and childcare facilities to coordinate all aspects of food safety to build a safe and healthy eating environment for students and young children. It provides information and training resources related to basic food safety requirements for schools and childcare facilities, as well as other important areas that should be addressed in order to have a comprehensive food safety programme.

Please visit the CFS's webpage for details:
<https://www.cfs.gov.hk/school/index.html>









Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan

The Government of Japan announced the plan to discharge the nuclear-contaminated water generated in the process of cooling the reactors at the Fukushima nuclear power station into the ocean after treatment in summer 2023. The plan has aroused concern from the international community and the public.

The CFS has implemented the latest control measures on food imported from Japan after nuclear-contaminated water discharge, and announced that the import of aquatic products harvested, manufactured, processed or packaged in 10 metropolis/prefectures including Tokyo, Fukushima, Chiba, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Gunma, Miyagi, Niigata, Nagano, and Saitama has been banned to ensure food safety and protect public health.

The Government will continue to maintain close communication with the Consulate General of Japan in Hong Kong and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, and will closely monitor the latest situation of imported foods from Japan and the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant, assess related risks and take appropriate corresponding measures. In order to allow the public to better grasp the latest safety information on foods imported from Japan, the CFS will announce the radiation test results of food samples imported from Japan on this thematic webpage every working day, and will issue press releases on a regular basis.

For the situation update of radiation tests on food imported from Japan, please visit the CFS's webpage:
https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety_04.html

New control measures	
Metropolis/Prefectures	Foods
Tokyo, Fukushima, Chiba, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Gunma, Miyagi, Niigata, Nagano, Saitama 10 (metropolis) prefectures	All live, frozen, chilled, dried or in any way preserved aquatic products and sea salt and raw or processed seaweed  
On-going measures	
Prefecture(s)	Foods
Fukushima	Vegetables, fruits, milk, milk beverages and dried milk  
4 prefectures of Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma	Vegetables, fruits, milk, milk beverages and dried milk  
5 prefectures of Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma	Frozen or chilled game, meat and poultry and poultry eggs  

Recruitment of Consumer Liaison Group Members

Thank you for your participation in the CLG. It requires a joint effort from all stakeholders to ensure food safety. Your friends and family are also welcome to join the 7th-term CLG. Please complete and return the attached membership form. It is also available for download from our website:

https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/committee/committee_clg_recruitment.html

For enquiries, please contact Mr AU YEUNG at 2381 6275. Please return the completed membership form to us by fax (2893 3547), email (clg@fend.gov.hk) or post (4/F, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department Nam Cheong Offices and Vehicle Depot, 87 Yen Chow Street West, Kowloon (Consumer Liaison Group)).