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# Targeted Food Surveillance — Nuts and Seeds

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Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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# Background

- Nuts, seeds and their products are very popular food in our locality. Nonetheless, these food may pose food safety problems through contamination by hazards like food poisoning organisms, fungal toxins and pesticides.
- Previously, there were reports of multi-state outbreak of Salmonella in US with more than 40 cases of human infection was tracked to contaminated peanut products. Eventually, over 300 products were recalled in the incident and two of the products had also been imported into Hong Kong which warranted the issue of a press release by CFS.
- In view of this, CFS conducted a targeted food surveillance to assess the safety of nuts and seeds available in our local market.

# Types of samples

- The CFS collected 200 samples of nuts and seeds from supermarkets and other retail points from September to October this year for:
  - **Chemical analysis**
    - Aflatoxins
    - Preservatives
    - Pesticides
    - Metallic contaminations
  - **Microbiological analysis** (*Salmonella*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Clostridium perfringens* and *Bacillus cereus* )

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# Overall result

- All sample results were satisfactory.



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# Advice for the trade and consumers

- Food manufactures should adhere to Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) for manufacturing food products, and comply with the legal requirements when using food additives. The trade should also source materials from reliable suppliers.
- Consumers should purchase food from reliable shops. Do not buy or consume any nuts, seeds or their products which is out of expiry date, moulded or not in a good quality.
- Take a balanced diet so as to avoid over-eating of nuts and seeds which are generally high in energy.