
Survey on popular food items – Sandwiches and salads

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

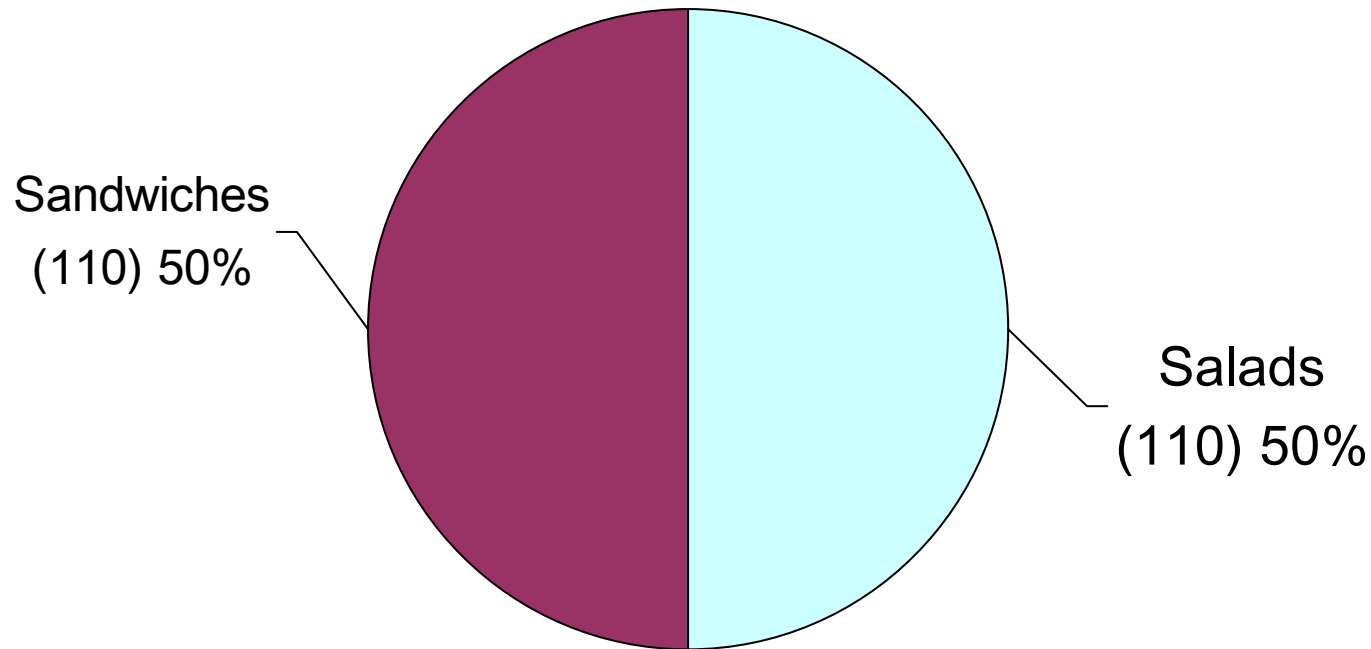
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Background

- Sandwiches and salads are very common food in Hong Kong. Besides available in restaurants, many sandwiches and salads pre-packaged by food factories are also available in supermarkets and restaurants with take away service.
- Sandwiches and salads are usually made by mixing ready-to-eat vegetables, dressings and various marinated ingredients such as poultry, meat, seafood and fruits and they are usually served cold.
- As their production frequently involve the use of uncooked food and manual handling, food safety would be hampered by faults from the choice of ingredients to their production and storage. The CFS has therefore conducted a project on “Sandwiches and salad” as the theme of “Survey on popular food items” to assess the safety of these food items.

Types of samples tested

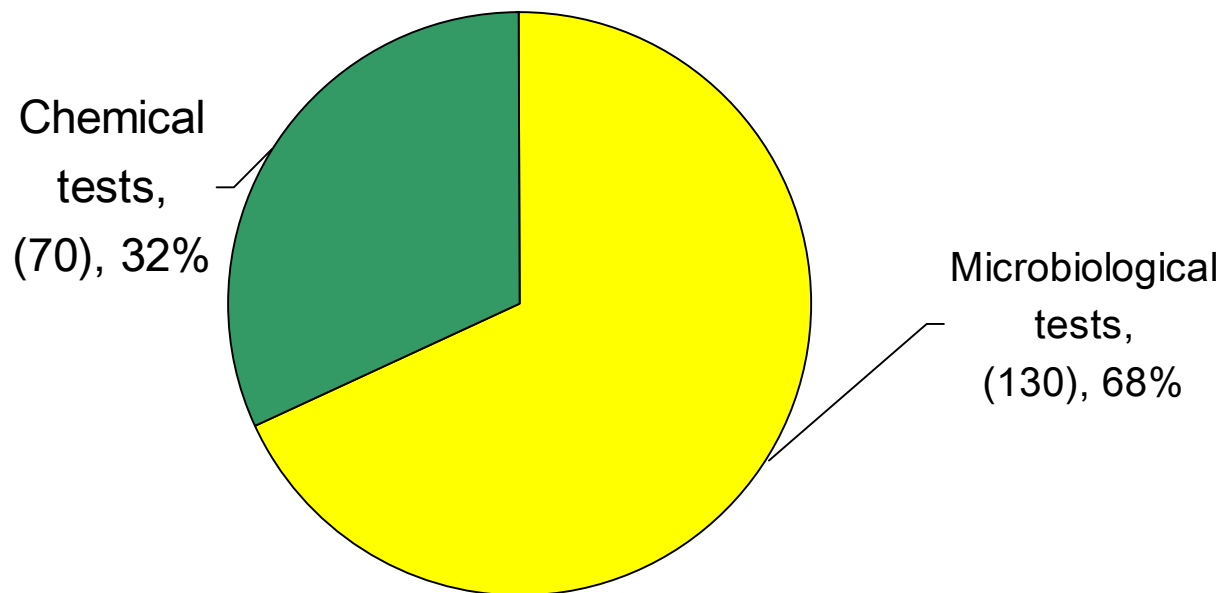
- 220 samples were taken during September and October 2012 for testing.



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

Types of tests

- The 220 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, pesticides residues, aflatoxin, preservatives, antioxidants, colouring matters, and mineral oil .

Overall results

- All 220 samples passed the tests.



Advice for the trade

- Although all samples passed the tests, the trade should always comply with hygienic practices including:
 - Handling of raw materials:
 - Purchase raw materials from reputable and reliable suppliers, and stocks of raw materials and ingredients should be consumed in a first-in-first-out basis.
 - Estimate the demand for salads and sandwiches as well as their fillings carefully to avoid over-production.
 - Wash all vegetables and fruits thoroughly.
 - Cook egg, poultry, meat and seafood thoroughly.
 - Use pasteurized eggs or egg products to prepare salad dressings.

Advice for the trade (Cont'd)

- Storage of food
 - Store raw materials at the appropriate temperature (e.g. frozen items at -18°C or below; chilled items at 4°C or below).
 - Store salad, sandwiches or dressings with packages opened at 4°C or below
 - Discard products after storing at room temperature for more than 4 hours.

- Hygienic practices:
 - Observe good personal, food and environmental hygiene.
 - Ready-to-eat and non ready-to-eat foods must be handled with separate sets of utensils, containers, and chopping boards, etc, in order to minimise the chance of cross contamination.

- Maintain a good recording system in accordance with the Food Safety Ordinance to allow source tracing if needed.

Advice for consumers

- Observe the “Five Keys to Food Safety”:
 - Patronize at reputable and reliable shop.
 - Check the "use-by date" and pay attention to the storage temperature of pre-packaged food.
 - Consume as soon as possible.
 - If food are not consumed immediately, they should be packed and stored soon at 4°C or below separately from other raw food. Consumption should also be made within 1 to 2 days or shelf-life.
- The elderly, children, pregnant women and persons with lowered immunity should be careful when choosing food especially high risk food, such as sandwiches and salads.