

Food Safety Update

This publication will keep operators of food service establishments up to date on food safety, regulations and foodborne illness. Content is generated as a collaboration between Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health.

Health Protection | *Ensuring Healthy People and Healthy Environments*

2013

Informed Dining

Informed Dining, which officially launched in May 2012, is a voluntary nutrition information program for restaurants in BC. More than 300 restaurant outlets are currently participating in the program by providing their customers point-of-purchase nutrition information to make informed menu decisions. By participating in Informed Dining, restaurants, both large and small, can respond to growing consumer interest in nutrition and be leaders in customer service. The recognized "Informed Dining" logo lets customers know they can access nutrition information in a consistent format to help them make informed choices.

Small Business Support for Informed Dining has been renewed for a limited time!

Small business operators¹ can benefit from a suite of services offered by the BC Government to offset the costs of participating in the Informed Dining program.

Last winter, 30 restaurants benefitted from the small business support program. "When developing the Informed Dining program, we recognized that independent restaurants would have more challenges to participate in the program than national chains," says Lorrie Cramb, BC's acting Provincial Nutritionist, "the small business support program removes those barriers and we are pleased to be able to offer it once again."

"The team at Informed Dining have been great to work with. With their professional approach and much appreciated guidance our customers can now make informed dining decisions."

Matt Hennessy, Food & Beverage Manager
Swiftsure Restaurant & Lounge
1st Informed Dining Restaurant

¹ Less than five outlets in Canada and less than 50 employees per outlet.



Restaurant operators accepted into the program receive a suite of services including nutrient analysis by a registered dietitian, graphic design and \$300 printing grants. Restaurant operators can also work with a registered dietitian to reformulate their recipes to reduce the calorie and/or sodium content.

For more information on the Informed Dining program and the small business support program:

Visit: www.informeddining.ca

Email: informeddining@gov.bc.ca

Call 8-1-1 to speak to a HealthLink BC Dietitian ■

Food Donor Encouragement Act

What food premises operators need to know about giving (and receiving) donated foods

Food recovery is a hot topic as many business and organizations look to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in our landfills. Many local governments are actively engaged in food waste reduction and sustainability initiatives, educating businesses about food donation and connecting food donors with rescue agencies.

In BC, the *Food Donor Encouragement Act (FDEA)* protects people and corporations from liability if they donate good food with good intentions. It does not protect people who deliberately or carelessly donate bad food. The FDEA does

Continued on page 3 ...

New FOODSAFE Level 2 Course

The 2011 Edition of FOODSAFE Level 2 is very different from its predecessor. The goal of the 2011 edition is to provide owners, managers, supervisors and senior staff in the food service industry with the knowledge and tools they need to prepare sanitation plans, write food safety plans, and above all to create and maintain a culture of food safety in their establishments. FOODSAFE Level 2 is available as a face-to-face classroom course and as an instructor-led online course.

There are three modules in the new FOODSAFE Level 2 course. Module 1 is a review of the food safety basics learned in Level 1. Participants taking a face-to-face course will normally complete this module online before coming to the class. Module 2 focuses on managing for food safety, including methods for establishing and maintaining a culture of food safety and developing practices and policies that will encourage staff to follow safe food handling practices. Module 3 focuses on understanding and writing process-based and recipe-based food safety plans.

The focus in the new Level 2 course is not on 'doing' safe food handling, but rather on training, supporting, modeling and encouraging safe food handling practices

for all staff throughout a food service establishment. The course is highly interactive and includes thought-provoking discussion questions and interactive activities that encourage participants to think about the food safety culture in their own establishments.

The new Level 2 course is based upon the principles of adult education, allowing participants to be active participants in their own learning. Assessment for the course is based on the application of new knowledge gained through the activities, discussions, videos and readings. Participants are required to complete a cleaning schedule, and either a process-based or a recipe-based food safety plan for a menu item in their establishment. The final exam consists of ten short-answer questions where participants apply their understanding of the course content to specific food service industry problems. ■

FOODSAFE course schedule online

Fraser Health's schedule for FOODSAFE is available online. It provides dates, times, locations, course costs and registration details. Go to fraserhealth.ca and search for the word FOODSAFE, or contact any Environmental Health office within Fraser Health.

Bug Spotlight: Salmonellosis

What is it?

Salmonella are bacteria that can be found living in the intestines of many animals including chickens, cows, pigs and sheep. During the slaughtering process, bacteria from the animal's intestines may infect the meat. Common sources of Salmonella infection are undercooked poultry and other meats, undercooked eggs, unpasteurized milk, contaminated food and water. If the food we eat is contaminated with Salmonella, it can infect the human intestinal tract causing an infection called Salmonellosis.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of Salmonellosis may occur 12 to 36 hours after exposure and may include stomach cramps, diarrhea, fever, nausea, and vomiting. Most people recover within 7 days. People most at risk from a Salmonella infection include infants, young children, the elderly and the immune compromised. Salmonella is spread by the fecal-oral route which means it can be transmitted from person to person if people don't wash their hands properly after using the washroom.

What is important to know as a food handler?

- Prevent direct contact between raw meats and other foods.
- Use a separate cutting board for raw meats.
- Keep raw poultry and meats covered and stored on the lowest level shelves in a refrigerator to prevent raw meats from dripping onto other foods.
- Thaw poultry and meat under refrigeration or cold running water, not at room temperature.
- Cook poultry and meat to proper internal temperatures. For example, the minimum internal temperature for poultry is 74°C (165°F).
- Wash your hands before handling any food and after handling raw poultry, meat or eggs.
- Properly clean and sanitize all dishware.
- Always use pasteurized products such as milk, eggs and juices. ■



Donairs and Shawarmas

New requirements for 2-step cooking

Donairs and shawarmas have traditionally been prepared using one cooking step. Meat from the cone is sliced off as it roasts and is served directly to the customer. If the interior of the cone is insufficiently cooked or the cone is sliced too deeply undercooked meat slices may be served.

The British Columbia Centre for Disease Control has developed a new provincial guideline that outlines safe handling procedures for donairs and shawarmas. One of the new requirements is a 2-step (secondary) cooking process to reduce food borne illness associated with these products.

A 2-step cooking process is important to ensure that all disease causing organisms have been destroyed and your customers receive the safest food possible.

What is a 2-step (secondary) cooking process?

1st step

- Once the exterior of the meat cone is cooked, the outside layer of meat (approximately ¼ inch or 0.6 centimeters) may be sliced off using a clean, sanitized knife.

2nd step

- After slicing the meat from the cone it must be immediately re-cooked (secondary cook) to make sure all disease causing organisms have been destroyed.
- Beef and lamb must be cooked to at least 71°C (160°F) for at least 15 seconds.
- Poultry must be cooked to at least 74°C (165°F) for at least 15 seconds.



You should use a thermometer to make sure the correct temperature is reached.

You don't need special equipment to finish your second cook; you may use a grill, oven or any other method approved by your Environmental Health Officer.

If you prepare or consume such products, get a copy of the new guideline for more information at: www.bccdc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/7AE4EAEA-9A72-437C-8134-0B8E7EDFA2A3/0/Guidelines_Donairs_Final_June2012.pdf ■

Needle Tenderizing

Have your beef products been needle tenderized?

As the owner/operator of a food service establishment it is important to check with your suppliers to determine if any of your beef products have been "needle tenderized".

Mechanical meat tenderizers use needles and blades to penetrate steak and roasts. Health Canada says the process of mechanically tenderizing meat is a "very common practice" that is used by suppliers, retailers and restaurants "to improve the tenderness and flavour of cooked beef."

This process can drive E. coli on the surface of the meat into the center, making it harder to kill during cooking. As a result, there may be an increased chance that bacteria like E. coli O157:H7 are not killed when these beef products are cooked "rare".

It's not clear exactly how much meat processed in Canada goes through mechanical tenderization, but the Public Health Agency of Canada says in a study it could be between 20 to 50 per cent.

The Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health restaurant operators are being notified to advise their clients that Health Canada recommends cooking needle tenderized beef to a minimum internal temperature of 71°C unless the operator(s) can provide evidence through their food safety plan that their proposed cooking methods are safe.

Please refer to Health Canada's website for additional information. www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/_2012/2012_158-eng.php ■

Continued from page 1

Food Donor Encouragement Act

not apply to those that distribute donated food for profit. As an operator of a food premises that wishes to donate food or accept donated food for use in their operation, they are also bound by the requirements of the BC Food Premises Regulation (FPR).

"Good food" in the context of the Food Premises Regulation does not permit the donation of previously served food (Section 15, FPR). If your food premises receives donated foods, then as the operator you must ensure the foods are coming from an approved source (Section 11, FPR).

If you are not sure if the donated food is good or bad, contact your Environmental Health Officer who would be glad to assist. ■

Food Safety during Food Recalls

Canada's most recent recall of beef products occurred in 2012 when E. coli O157:H7 was identified in the Alberta beef processing facility, XL Foods. The recall was highly publicized as XL products were widely distributed across Canada and into the United States.

E. coli O157:H7 is a bacteria that when consumed, may cause serious and potentially life-threatening illness. It is commonly found in the intestines of cattle. Beef may become contaminated when animals are slaughtered and the meat is processed. All raw beef including that produced by small local processors may become contaminated.

To protect public health, large beef processing facilities routinely test for the presence of E. coli O157:H7. A positive test result indicates that the product may need to be removed from the marketplace. However, not all beef processors test for E. coli O157:H7.

Food handlers should assume that all raw beef is contaminated with disease causing microorganisms and take the appropriate precautions when handling and serving beef.

The following safe food handling and preparation practices will help reduce the spread of E. coli bacteria.

- Store perishable foods such as raw beef at temperatures $\leq 4^{\circ}\text{C}$ (40°F).
- Cook ground beef and mechanically tenderized beef to an internal temperature of at least 71°C (160°F) for 15 seconds; use a probe thermometer to verify that this temperature is reached.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after handling raw beef.
- Wash and sanitize utensils such as knives, plates and other surfaces used for preparing and storing raw beef.
- Store raw beef below foods that are ready to eat. ■

Meat Slicers

The hidden risks lurking within

Deli meat slicers are commonly used in restaurants and other food retail establishments and they may be difficult to clean and sanitize due to their size and complexity. An improperly cleaned meat slicer can allow food to build up in the cracks, seals, rings and crevices of the machine where disease causing bacteria such as Listeria can grow and lead to foodborne illness and even death.

Examine the meat slicer routinely for chips, cracks and worn seals and have the meat slicer repaired or replaced as needed. Recent outbreaks of serious illness have been linked to improperly cleaned and sanitized deli meat slicers.

The risk of foodborne illness from a meat slicer can be reduced by:

- Cleaning and sanitizing deli meat slicers by following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Sanitize meat slicers every 4 hours during operation to prevent growth of bacteria.
- Keep the instructions to sanitize posted near the slicer location and follow them closely.
- Have the slicer professionally serviced according to the manufacturer's recommended schedule.
- Proper servicing may require the components to be removed and reattached with replacement of seals and gaskets.



It is important to note that wiping down the slicer after each use to remove visible debris is not a substitute for thoroughly cleaning and sanitizing the equipment and will not be adequate to prevent growth of bacteria. For more information on maintaining deli meat slicers contact your Environmental Health Officer. ■

Feedback

Tell us what you think of our Food Safety Update and topics you would like to see in future issues. Contact liz.postnikoff@fraserhealth.ca or Jasmina.Egeler@vch.ca

This update has been prepared and published as a collaboration between Health Protection departments in Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health.

Editors: Steven Eng, Inderjeet Gill and Liz Postnikoff, Fraser Health; Steve Chong and Jasmina Egeler, Vancouver Coastal Health

Layout: Patricia Buchanan, Fraser Health

Contributors: Health Protection staff from Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health

Environmental Health Offices:

Vancouver Coastal Health
Fraser Health

www.vch.ca/foodsafety
www.fraserhealth.ca/foodsafety