



Northern Health Food Digest

Fall 2012 Edition, Issue 3

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From the Editor

Thanks for picking up this edition of Northern Health's quarterly food newsletter. This newsletter is made for you the restaurant operators, food handlers and culinary experts - to help ensure that the services that you are providing are up to date with current health standards. We hope that you find the information in here useful and that it helps to raise your awareness and bridge the gap between food handlers and health inspectors. You can expect to find information

on current hot topics in food safety, updates on outbreaks, and tips and tricks of the trade to make safe food handling as easy as breathing. We are always looking for feedback! What would you like to read about? What kinds of tips or resources would you like to see and was this issue useful to you? ***Future copies will be sent out electronically***, but if you wish a hard copy please contact your local Environmental Health Officer.



northern health
the northern way of caring

Can ice make your customers sick

Is there mould and slime inside your ice machine? Unfortunately the answer from many restaurant owners would have to be yes! The inside of your ice machine provides the ideal conditions for mould and slime to grow when a regular cleaning and sanitizing routine is neglected. The slime or biofilm consists of spoilage bacteria and can also harbour more harmful bacterium such as E-Coli and Salmonella. The slime might not make everyone ill but our elders, children and people with weakened immune systems are the most vulnerable.

Other sources of contamination can occur directly from staff by improper food handling practices. All employees should follow these simple steps.

- Ensure your hands are clean before scooping ice.
- Always use a designated scoop to fill container and hold container by the handle.
- Ensure ice scoop is in good condition and kept in a sanitary location. Do not allow the handle to touch the ice or the inside walls.
- Do not use the ice if there is obvious contamination and immediately notify management.
- Notify management if the lid seal or other physical damage is observed.
- Do not store food or other items inside the machine.
- Ensure the lid is closed after each use.

Your Sanitation Plan procedures should include the manufacturers recommendations for proper maintenance in addition to a frequent cleaning and sanitizing schedule. Here are some recommendations that your plan should include.

- Daily - Use a paper towel to wipe any condensation from the inside surfaces
- Daily - Clean the lid guides and the lid seal with a paper towel.
- Weekly - Sanitize the inside surfaces including removable ice chutes with a sanitizing solution 100 ppm chlorine or 200 ppm Quaternary Ammonium compound.
- Every 3 months - Turn machine off, remove the ice and complete a thorough cleaning and sanitizing of all accessible components.

****Ensure ice machines are located away from washroom doors, garbage and all other potential sources of contamination.****
Ensure the drain hose has an air gap**

If your water is not treated you may wish to have added safety or flavour enhancement,



you can install a filtration system such as carbon filters for taste and odour reduction and 0.5 micron or an absolute one micron filter for pathogen removal.

Advance Food Preparation

With extra items to prepare, and a limited amount of time, there is a temptation to make as much food ahead of time as possible. But not all recipes can be safely adapted to advance cooking. Everything changes when you add time to the equation.

Time makes a difference because of it's relationship with **Temperature**.

Time and Temperature can work for you or against you. With high temperatures you need less time to make a food safe; but leaving food at a medium temperature (between 4°C and 60°C) for too long can create a high risk because bacteria can grow well in this temperature range. Here are some points to remember with advance food preparation:

1. Make sure any special menu items can be safely prepared in your facility. Not all kitchens can accommodate the same foods. Your kitchen may work for regular menu items, but could be inadequate for others. Advance preparation can further complicate this, particularly if limited space is an issue.
2. Food must stay out of room temperatures as much as possible. As a rule of thumb, 2 hours is a maximum time for foods at room temperature unless other controls are in place and discussed with your Environmental Health Officer. Remember bacteria grow very well at room temperature!
3. Foods which are most suitable for advance preparation include baked goods high in sugar (cookies, most

cakes), dry foods (including many breads), and those snack foods that don't require refrigeration.

4. If possible, prepare food just before you serve it. This eliminates the chance of it sitting at a hazardous temperature. Organization: i.e. potato salad prep. Prepare all items separately then do the final mix just prior to the event.
5. Any temperature above 4°C (40°F) and below 60°C (140°F) is hazardous for food.
6. If you do prepare in advance, cool the food quickly and store in the cooler, or keep it hot until served

(Batch) Cooking

Preparing larger volumes of food are a fact of life during busy times. Some recipes can be easily adjusted, or the foods prepared in batches to meet the demands. Others present many new challenges when the volumes increase.

For example, a recipe for 2 gallons of chili that you might make every week may present very few hazards. But converting the recipe to 10 gallons of chili may create a high risk if you try to cool it the same way as you cool a 2 gallon batch. **You can't simply use 5 times the ingredients and end up with the same safe product.** Cooling 10 gallons is a lot more difficult than cooling 2 gallons! And with cooling, speed is everything.

Batch cooking may allow you to get ahead during the busy times, but you need to have a plan ready to deal with the new risks presented by this process.

You need to fully consider all of the risks presented by a food item before deciding to add it to a menu. This includes extra risks presented by making large volumes and by preparing the food in advance.



Food allergies and what you need to know.

Up to 1.2 million Canadians may be affected by life-threatening food allergies and these numbers are increasing, especially among children.

Although many foods can cause allergic reactions, Health Canada has a list of allergens that are responsible for the majority of allergic reactions to food in our country. These allergens are peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, soy, seafood (such as fish, crustaceans and shellfish), wheat, eggs, milk and sulphites.

All of your cooks and wait staff should be aware of this allergy list as well as any menu item that might have one of these allergens as a component. Then if a customer asks if a menu item has a specific allergen as part of that menu item your staff can answer yes or no as applicable. Allergens can cause a reaction in your respiratory system, stomach and intestines, skin or cardiovascular system. The type and severity of reaction and symptoms of the allergy vary, from mild skin irritations like hives to breathing difficulties and loss of consciousness. Symptoms can also develop at different rates, sometimes getting worse very quickly. The most severe reaction, called anaphylaxis, can be fatal.

Food allergies are triggered when your body's immune system mistakenly identifies a food protein to be harmful. Exposure to even the smallest amounts of allergenic protein can cause a serious allergic reaction in sensitive individuals. Cross contamination within your food premise must always be a consideration so be ever vigilant.

You can learn about all food recalls due to food allergens at the CFIA web site.

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english>

Chef's challenge raised big bucks for charity

It was a night of girl power and great hors d'oeuvres at the 2nd annual Chef's Challenge.

Nine local chefs and catering companies competed for the best dishes of the night.

"It's such a great cause," one chef said. "We wanted to support the organization, and of course, everyone wants to win."

Organizers said the event would pump \$15,000 to \$20,000 into the non-profit's coffers. Last year the event drew 175 people, this year over 400 tickets were pre-ordered . . .

'Chef's challenge' leaves 70 suffering from diarrhea (June 3, 2010)

At least 70 people are sick after a charity "Chef's Challenge" fundraiser.

Laboratory testing has confirmed at least seven cases of an intestinal infection caused by cyclospora, a single-cell parasite spread by people who consume food or water contaminated with feces, the Community Health Services Department said.

Cyclospora infects the small intestine and causes watery diarrhea with frequent, sometime explosive, bowel movements. Other symptoms include loss of appetite, weight loss, cramps, and sometimes vomiting and other flu-like symptoms.

It usually takes a week for someone who has eaten contaminated food to begin to feel sick.

Left untreated, the illness can last a few days to a month or longer, with one or more relapses possible.

'Chef's Challenge' Sickens 190 (June 8, 2010)

Guests hit with watery diarrhea and explosive bowel movements

Nearly half the 400 guests of a charity "Chef's Challenge" have reported feeling sick with symptoms consistent with an outbreak of an intestinal parasite, health officials say.

"We have spoken to over 250 people, and what we have now is 190 people who have been ill with signs and symptoms of Cyclospora,"

There are now 27 lab-confirmed cases of cyclospora - a single-cell parasite spread in food or water contaminated with feces - following the fundraiser last month.

Other Headlines of the several hundred news reports of or following the incident:

Chef's Challenge leaves many ill (June 2 2010)

Dozens sick after Sarnia food-tasting event (June 3, 2010)

Chef's Challenge on hold for now (Feb 26, 2011)

- What are the ramifications?
- Great fundraiser lost to deserving charity. There is continued support for the event
- but the organizers are terrified and embarrassed by the outbreak
- Reputation of the charity sullied
- Reputation of all chefs involved put into question
- Attendees violently ill for days

Don't let this happen to you! Develop clear food protection practices and ensure all staff understand your food safety plan.

Make food safety a part of your business culture and help your staff be successful and proud of their efforts.

What Restaurant owners need to know about licensed slaughter facilities.

Can you buy your meat from Farmer Joe, or at the local farmers market for use in your restaurant? **NO..**

Whenever livestock or poultry are slaughtered in BC to produce meat for human consumption, the person carrying out the slaughter, or the operator of the slaughter facility, is required to have a **licence**.

The Province of BC issues **Class A, B, D and E licences** under the BC Meat Inspection Regulation (Food Safety Act). **Class C licences** were issued as a temporary transition measure to slaughter facilities upgrading to an A or B licence, and the **Class C licenses are being phased out. Which Licence?**

Meat produced under **Class E and D licences** can only be sold within the regional district in which it was produced. Producers who hold one of these licences can carry out the slaughter themselves, or they can hire a competent slaughter operator to do it for them.

Class E licences permit producers to slaughter up to 10 of their own animal units per year, of their own animals only. Meat produced under a Class E licence can only be sold directly to the end consumer. The meat must be labelled: "Not government inspected - not for resale For sale only in



the Regional District [name of regional district in which slaughter site is located].”

Class D licences permit a producer to slaughter up to 25 animal units per year of their own or other producers’ animals. Meat produced under a Class D licence can be sold directly to the end consumer, or to retail outlets and restaurants in the regional district for which the licence is valid. The meat must be labelled; “Class D - Not government inspected. For sale only in the Regional District of [name of regional district in which slaughter site is located]”.

Class A and B licences are available anywhere in the province. There are no restrictions on the animal numbers that can be slaughtered under these licences. The meat can be sold anywhere in British Columbia.

So for all you restaurant owners when buying meat from a supplier it must come from someone that holds a Class A or B licence [within BC], or D licence [within your regional district].

For a list of Class A, B, D, and E licensed facilities see <http://www.bccdc.ca/foodhealth/meat/Slaughterhouses.htm> or contact Lynnette Winsor, Lynnette.Winsor@northernhealth.ca



B.C. Restaurants help families make informed choices

Now the B.C. restaurant industry is partnering with the Province to provide restaurant customers with the information they need to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

The \$1.9-million Healthy Families BC - Informed Dining program will give customers the information they need to make healthier choices when eating out. Participating restaurants will add the Informed Dining program logo and a statement on their menu or menu board, letting customers know that nutrition information for all standard menu items is available upon request. Restaurants will provide nutrition information (similar to what is currently found on packaged foods)

before or at the point of ordering in the restaurant. Information may be provided on a brochure, a menu insert or poster.

Calorie and sodium content will be highlighted, and restaurants must also include information on daily sodium and calorie requirements. Customers will then be able to make informed choices when choosing meals for themselves or their children.

It is estimated that Canadians currently purchase one in ten meals or snacks from a restaurant. By providing nutrition information in restaurants, customers can make decisions that will help to promote healthy weights and prevent high blood pressure and chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer.

Informed Dining program is a component of the Province’s Healthy Families BC (www.HealthyFamiliesBC.ca) campaign to reduce obesity and prevent chronic disease. It has been developed in collaboration with the Canadian Restaurant and Food Services Association, the BC Restaurant and Food Services Association, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC and Yukon, chain and independent restaurant leaders and public health partners. Although voluntary for private retail food services, the program will be mandated in food service establishments in health-care facilities.

The Province has been working with the restaurant industry for several years to help protect the health of British Columbians. In 2009, B.C. was the first jurisdiction in Canada to regulate the use of trans fat in restaurants and food service establishments.

Quick Facts:

According to the BCRFA, there are about 12,000 restaurants in British Columbia.

Nutrition labelling of pre-packaged food is already regulated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer are estimated to cost our health-care system between \$730 million and \$830 million per year.

Reducing sodium intake could prevent up to 23,500 cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke per year, and could generate direct savings of \$1.38 billion annually.

The Canadian Council of Food and Nutrition reported that in 2006, of all the money spent on food in Canada, 40 per cent is spent in food service outlets.

People who eat more sodium than needed are at greater risk from high blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for stroke, heart disease and kidney disease.

British Columbians consume more than double the amount of sodium considered adequate to promote good health in B.C., as recommended by Health Canada.

FoodSafe Corner



If you own a restaurant, you know that at least one person on shift at all times must have food safety certification. FoodSafe is now available online in an online ‘virtual’ class through Open School BC, or by correspondence

(Level 1 only) through Go2. See www.FoodSafe.ca for available courses in your area or links to online courses.

MarketSafe is now available

MarketSafe is a food safety training program for farmers and producers who make, bake or grow products to sell at local farmers’ markets, farm gates or other types of temporary food markets. It was designed to increase awareness and knowledge of food safety and safe food handling procedures for farmers’ market vendors, market managers, farm gate vendors, home kitchen small scale food processors, and others who may make, bake or produce food products for public consumption outside of regulated food service establishments.

Contact your local Environmental Health Officer to find an instructor/class near you!



Regional Food Systems Expo 2011

October 17 in Prince George



Regional Food Systems Expo

October 17, 2011, Prince George, BC

Calling all chefs, grocers and food service managers in BC Northern Region! The opportunity to connect with direct farm suppliers and leading edge experts in the food service industry is coming to Prince George. Join us as we host local farm and food service operators to share information about products, menus opportunities and potential business connections. Learn from experts in the latest trends in the food service industry, including healthy eating, sustainable purchasing and local and organic foods. Take advantage of this incredible opportunity to connect with other industry operators and learn from their experiences.

Hosted by the Beyond the Market project, the Regional Food System Expo 2011 will take place Monday, October 17 in Prince George. Registration is free for all northern chefs and food service managers. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

For more information and to register, please visit our website at www.beyondthemarket.ca or contact Jillian Merrick at Community Futures Fraser-Fort George. Email: jillianm@cfdc.bc.ca phone: 250-562-9622 ext 115.

Taste of the North: a Feast of Local Flavour



Celebrate World Food Day and kick-off the Regional Food Systems Expo. Join us Sunday, October 16, 2011 at the College of New Caledonia in Prince George for Taste of the North: a Feast of Local Flavour where we are offering the public a unique gourmet dining experience. With a glass and napkin in hand, you can taste the very best that northern agriculture has to offer.

Prepared by Chef Christian and the students of the CNC Professional Cook Program, this wandering gala will feature more than a dozen unique taste sensations prepared using a wide of variety of meats, cheeses, fruits, vegetables, grains, and more, all harvested from the Highway 16 region.

Taste of the North will highlight the relationship between farmer and chef, and showcase the potential of our local food system. Guests can expect to bump elbows with many of the farmers who provided food for the menu while sampling a feast of culinary delights.

Tickets for the event are \$40.00 and are on sale at the Community Futures Fraser-Fort George office and the College of New Caledonia bookstore. Cash payment only.

For more information, please visit our website at www.beyondthemarket.ca or contact Jillian Merrick at Community Futures Fraser-Fort George. jillianm@cfdc.bc.ca phone: 250-562-9622 ext 115.