



Northern Health Food Digest

Fall 2010 Edition

In this issue

- FoodSafe courses and where to find them
- Salmonella chester: a foodborne illness outbreak in BC
- How to clean your clean-in-place equipment
- How to pass your next health inspection (checklist included)

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From the Editor

Thanks for picking up the first edition of Northern Health's Quarterly Food Digest. This newsletter is made for you - restaurant operators, food handlers and culinary experts - to 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 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 (like the handy "how to pass your food inspection" checklist included in this issue).

We are 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? Would you rather save a tree and receive an electronic copy? Please fill out our reader satisfaction cards and mail them back to us, or contact your local Environmental Health Officer.



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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 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!

Salmonella Chester Outbreak in BC

In the News!

A recent outbreak of gastrointestinal illness in BC has been associated with Salmonella Chester (a rare type of Salmonella bacteria). The common food consumed by these cases was headcheese, which had been purchased from various stores throughout the province. As of August 13th there were 28 cases in BC and many others across the country. A voluntarily and costly recall from the marketplace was initiated for the affected products distributed across the country.

How an incident like this can affect you and your business:

The cause of headcheese contamination is not yet known. Investigators will be looking at such records as: staff illness or absenteeism, food safety plans, temperature logs, cleaning and sanitizing schedules, safety of product suppliers, etc. If precautions are not taken in your facilities the same thing could happen! This is why

documentation and always ensuring food is purchased from safe sources is important.

Note: The majority of people infected with Salmonella Chester were elderly and approximately half required hospitalization. Some of these people could have been your customers and may have inadvertently blamed you for their illness. It is important that you take all measures to prevent illness and document those controls in your facility.

The Impact of Salmonellosis in BC

Salmonellosis (illness caused by various Salmonella species) is the second most frequently reported bacterial gastroenteritis in B.C., after campylobacteriosis. In 2009, 952 cases of salmonellosis were reported in BC. Enteritidis, Typhimurium and Typhi remained the top three serotypes isolated in 2009. Salmonella are naturally occurring bacteria found in the intestines of animals, particularly poultry, cattle and swine. Salmonella can contaminate meat, eggs, dairy and raw fruits and vegetables.

Symptoms May Include:

- Stomach cramps
- Diarrhoea
- Fever
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dehydration can occur, especially in infants

Symptoms start an average of 12 to 36 hours (range: 6 to 72 hours) after exposure to the organism. Sometimes a person can be infected and have no symptoms or can carry the salmonella for a long period of time. Symptoms last 4 to 7 days and most people recover without



treatment. People at highest risk of severe infection include young children, the elderly, and those with weak immune systems.

Take Precautions!

Food contaminated with Salmonella may not look or smell spoiled. Food safety practices, including preventing cross-contamination and thorough cooking of foods, are ways we minimize risks in the kitchen. Adequate hand washing is always very important.

References:

http://www.bccdc.ca/resourcematerials/newsalerts/healthalerts/SalmonellaChester_July14.htm

http://www.bccdc.ca/dis-cond/a-z/_s/SalmonellaInfection/default.htm

http://www.bccdc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/1695E3F8-7D4A-4039-8CD6-947F486F9DBB/0/EPI_SR_CDAnnual2009_20100819.pdf

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/corpaffr/rearapp/2010/20100714be.shtml>

<http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/chester/>

Clean-in-place equipment - sanitation procedures

“Cleaning In Place” refers to the process of cleaning and sanitizing food processing equipment in the assembled position without the need for dismantling and cleaning the individual parts, and refers to all equipment and utensils that come into contact with food.

Prior to use, all equipment should be cleaned and sanitized. Make sure you follow the manufacturer’s/ employer’s directions before cleaning electrical equipment and ensure that LOCKOUT procedures have been followed. LOCKOUT = ensuring that the equipment is safely disconnected from the power source.

Any food equipment in continuous use with potentially hazardous foods (PHFs) should be washed and sanitized at least every 2 hours or according to your Food Safety Plan. The equipment should be dismantled as per instructions and thoroughly sanitized at the end of the day and during breaks to prevent the build-up of harmful germs in hard to reach crevices.

Example: Cleaning a Meat Slicer

Every 2 hours:

Without taking the slicer apart, wash it down with soapy water. Wipe the blade by moving from the centre of the blade towards the outer edges. Spray an approved sanitizer (200ppm Chlorine sanitizer; 12.5 - 25% Iodine sanitizer or 200ppm Quats (Quaternary Ammonium Compounds) sanitizer), allow contact time for at least 2 minutes and wipe it down.

Mid-day and nightly cleaning:

Disconnect the machine from the power source, dismantle the slicer according to manufacturer’s instructions, wash and sanitize individual parts manually or through the mechanical dishwasher, and allow to air dry.

EHO Visit? Don’t Panic!

If you run a food establishment you may have received a letter, a telephone call or a visit from an Environmental Health Officer (also known as Health Protection Officers or Public Health Inspectors).

The visit may be for one of several reasons:

1. **Routine inspection:** EHO’s inspect public facilities like restaurants regularly to ensure that the health and safety of the public is not at risk.
2. **Follow up inspection:** as a way of checking that problems found in a previous inspection or as a result of a complaint from a member of the public or staff have been corrected or are in the process of being corrected.
3. EHO’s will sometimes visit a food establishment for other reasons such as carrying out surveys or providing advice as part of a wider project.

On the next page is a checklist of items that your local EHO will be looking for on their next inspection. Remember to go through this checklist regularly, apply it to your facility, and you should have no problems in passing your inspection.



Inspection Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Water and ice from approved sources and protected from contamination	<input type="checkbox"/> Potentially hazardous foods stored hot are kept at 60° C or above during hot holding
<input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish, fish, milk, meat and meat products from approved sources	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate equipment for proper hot holding of PHF's
<input type="checkbox"/> Canned goods obtained from approved commercial processor (no home canning) and in satisfactory condition: no leaking, dented, rusted or swollen cans	<input type="checkbox"/> All poultry, poultry stuffings, pork, stuffed meats and stuffing containing meat are heated to 74° C or more.
<input type="checkbox"/> Eggs uncracked, clean and from approved sources	<input type="checkbox"/> All other potentially hazardous foods requiring cooking are heated to 74° C or above before they are placed in hot holding equipment.
<input type="checkbox"/> Food protected from chemicals, spoilage or other extraneous matter	<input type="checkbox"/> Hand dishwashing technique correct with wash and rinse water clean and at proper temperatures
<input type="checkbox"/> Ready-to-eat food separated from unsanitized surfaces or utensils	<input type="checkbox"/> Sanitizing rinse solutions at proper temperature, or concentration for proper time
<input type="checkbox"/> Ready-to-eat food not subjected to cross-contamination with raw food	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate dishwashing thermometer, gauges and/or chemical test kit
<input type="checkbox"/> Food stored or refrigerated in a manner so that cross-contamination cannot occur	<input type="checkbox"/> Wiping cloths are clean, restricted in use and stored in approved sanitizing solution
<input type="checkbox"/> Food protected from contamination by sewage or condensation from waste pipes	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-food contact surfaces of equipment and utensils are maintained and clean
<input type="checkbox"/> Food protected from customer contamination; customer-served foods displayed with sneeze guards	<input type="checkbox"/> Food contact surfaces adequately washed, rinsed and sanitized
<input type="checkbox"/> Toxic or poisonous chemicals are properly labeled, stored, used so that contamination of food will not occur	<input type="checkbox"/> Dishes and utensils visibly clean after washing
<input type="checkbox"/> Acid foods are not stored in containers or pipes that consist of toxic metals (antimony, cadmium, copper, zinc, lead).	<input type="checkbox"/> Glasses handled / stored properly
<input type="checkbox"/> Food stored in approved containers or bins and properly covered	<input type="checkbox"/> In use food including (ice) dispensing utensils properly stored.
<input type="checkbox"/> Foods properly labeled / repackaged	<input type="checkbox"/> Floors, wall, ceilings properly constructed and installed, in good repair with clean surfaces
<input type="checkbox"/> Foods stored off the floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate lighting / ventilation / exhaust fan
<input type="checkbox"/> Food protected from contamination during transportation or display / storage / preparation	<input type="checkbox"/> Food preparation areas separated from living quarters
<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate personal cleanliness / clean attire / controlled hair	<input type="checkbox"/> Premises maintained free of litter, unnecessary equipment or articles
<input type="checkbox"/> No tobacco use, eating / drinking in food preparation, dishwashing and/or food storage areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate garbage disposal containers / removal frequency
<input type="checkbox"/> Food workers are not ill with a disease transmissible by foods such as diarrhea ("stomach flu"), hepatitis, or have infected cuts or burns on their hands.	<input type="checkbox"/> Waste disposal isolated from the food preparation area
<input type="checkbox"/> Food workers use proper utensils (tongs, spoons, plastic gloves) to eliminate unnecessary hand contact with cooked and prepared foods.	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective measures used to control entrance (rodent and insect proof construction) and harborage of rodents, flies, cockroaches and other vermin
<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate handwashing by food handlers	<input type="checkbox"/> Insects and rodents are controlled
<input type="checkbox"/> Soap, paper towels, and/or hand wash basin with hot and cold running water in preparation area	<input type="checkbox"/> The shift supervisor / operator is FoodSafe certified
<input type="checkbox"/> Hand wash basin easily accessible and not being used for other purposes	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate food handler training
<input type="checkbox"/> All potentially hazardous foods are stored under refrigeration (4° C or less) except during necessary preparation procedures (no room temperature storage).	<input type="checkbox"/> Written Food Safety Plan is completed, available for review by food handlers, and being followed
<input type="checkbox"/> Potentially hazardous foods cooled to 4° C or less within 2 hours, in an approved manner	<input type="checkbox"/> Written cleaning and sanitizing procedures available, and followed by staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate equipment / space available for keeping all potentially hazardous food at 4° C or less	<input type="checkbox"/> Accurate refrigeration / hot holding thermometer is provided
<input type="checkbox"/> Potentially hazardous foods thawed in a safe manner	<input type="checkbox"/> Temperature records are available for freezers, refrigerators and hot holding equipment