

VINELAND'S FOOD SAFETY NEWSLETTER

February 2015

Produced by the Vineland Health Department- May be copied!



Vacuum packing- what you need to know before you start!

Vacuum packaging of foods will extend the shelf life of potentially hazardous foods. However, there are some significant risks associated with this practice that must be controlled or you could kill or paralyze your customers. By removing the oxygen from the package, you leave the food much more likely to grow clostridium botulinum bacteria (cause of botulism) and Listeria monocytogenes. Botulism can cause paralysis to death. Listeria can cause miscarriages and death. Not a good idea!

In order to safely vacuum package potentially hazardous foods, you must have a food safety expert create a special plan for you on how you will control these hazards. It is called a HACCP plan. This plan must be submitted to the Health Department for approval prior to starting the process. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to call us!

Did you know...?



- Alternating sanitizers (such as quaternary ammonia and bleach- never together) may help prevent Listeria from developing resistance to sanitizers and building biofilms.
- Increasing sanitizer strength above the recommended levels will not increase the amount of bacteria and viruses destroyed, but may result in harmful levels of chemicals in the food.
- Red Kidney beans can cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea if not first soaked in water for 5 hours, drained and boiled for at least 10 minutes. They contain a natural toxin called lectin or phytohaemagglutinin that must be removed by soaking and cooking.
- Cut leafy greens are capable of growing disease causing bacteria. The FDA recommends that these food items be kept under temperature controls. While not a NJ law yet, it is a good practice to start now.
- If your business wishes to or already donates food to an organization that redistributes to people in need, you need to let us know. Guidelines for Food Recovery programs can be found at: <http://www.foodprotect.org/guides/>
- Food that is in the possession of a customer and returned must be discarded. The only exception would be food that is not potentially hazardous and cannot possibly be contaminated. Canned goods that don't require refrigeration would be an example of a food that could be returned to sale.



Food Safety Training Available!

What are you waiting for?

Vineland Health Department:

Intended students: Anyone working with food, especially prep people. At least one person in charge from a Risk Type 2 Facility must have this course or similar.

Class focus: The causes of foodborne illness/ how to protect your establishment from an outbreak.

Instructors: Jeanne Garbarino (English) and Emma Lopez (for Spanish class only)

Certificate: Upon successful completion of course. Certificate is valid for 3 years.

Cost: \$ 15.00 for each person or 3 or more persons from the same establishment \$10 each

Location: Vineland- Please see enclosed schedule.

Dates: Please see the enclosed schedule. *Note: 6 hours of class must be attended to receive a certificate. This class does not count towards the State training requirement for Risk Type 3 Facilities. To find your risk type, look at your most recent report, license or call this office. For a current list of the classes available and required for Risk Type 3 Facilities, go to www.vldhealth.org.*

HOW TO REGISTER

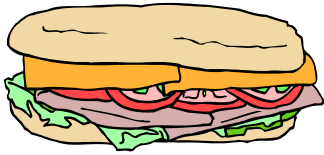
To register, return the enclosed application to the address listed with the appropriate fee. For more information, please call Jeanne Garbarino at 794-4000 extension 4326. Confirmation and directions will be sent upon registering.

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Outbreaks of Interest

Between 1998 and 2008, 24 multi-state outbreaks occurred involving cut leafy greens! It was determined that the pH, water activity and nutrients of cut leafy greens supported the growth of foodborne pathogens such as Salmonella, E. coli and Listeria. Refrigeration at 41°F or less inhibits their growth and promotes general die-off in these pathogens. Chemical sanitizers only marginally affect these bacteria due to surface attachment or being internalized into cut surfaces.

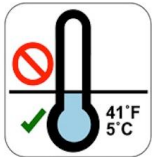
In November of 2014, a large Italian restaurant in Hamilton Township, NJ was the source of 4 customers testing positive for Hepatitis A. A foodhandler who prepared salads and sandwiches started showing symptoms at the end of November and was removed from food handling. This is correct protocol, however, people with Hepatitis A shed virus in their feces prior to developing symptoms. Bare hand contact with ready to eat foods was the suspected cause of the outbreak. Preventing outbreaks by ensuring your employees never touch ready to eat foods with their bare hands is worth the effort. You never know when it could happen at your facility. This restaurant received negative publicity in the newspapers and television along with having to discard all ready to eat foods that the infected foodhandler might have touched.



Controlling *Listeria monocytogenes* in Delis



Listeriosis is a serious infection usually caused by eating food contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* (Lm). It primarily affects older adults, pregnant women, newborns and adults with weakened immune systems. Deli products have been shown to be a major contributor to these cases. Slicers are key sources of *Listeria* growth and contamination. The good news is that there are steps a retailer can take that will greatly reduce the chance of *Listeria* affecting their products.



- **Storage temperature:** If all refrigerated ready to eat foods are stored at 41°F or below, approximately 9% of predicted listeriosis cases caused by contaminated deli products or sliced in the retail deli could be prevented. *Listeria* can grow at cool temperatures as low as 34°F.



- **Pre-slicing:** Do not pre-slice products in the morning, after cleaning. By slicing product at the time it is requested instead, you could cut your risk of Listeriosis by approximately 6%.



- **Cleaning and Sanitizing:** Clean and sanitize utensils and slicers every 4 hours. The risk of Listeriosis increases by 41% if wiping, washing and sanitizing are not performed on time. Cleaning and sanitizing slicers, alone, every 4 hours will reduce your risk by 34%.

- **Use low water pressure cleaning** in the deli areas. Splashing and overspray from high pressure hoses can send the bacteria into the air and onto nearby food contact surfaces.



- **Foodhandlers wear disposable gloves** or use suitable utensils when handling ready to eat foods. Change gloves as needed. Bare hand contact with ready to eat foods increases your risk of Listeriosis in a deli by 5% and greatly increases the risk of Norovirus.



- **Control condensation:** *Listeria* loves wet areas and could easily be transmitted to food and food contact surfaces through drips. Pooling water on the floor can serve as a breeding place for *Listeria*. Splashes can send the *Listeria* to your food areas.



- **Clean aprons and outer clothing:** Ensure that employees change aprons, frocks or smocks when they become soiled. Employees should never hold uncovered ready to eat foods directly against clothing. Aprons should never be worn into a lavatory.



- **Rinse your produce** before cutting or slicing. Use warmer water to rinse so you don't pull the bacteria into the cells.

Safe food handling practices combined with thorough cleaning will reduce your risk of *Listeria* becoming a problem for your facility and customers. This article was excerpted from:

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/compliance-guides-index> .



TEST YOUR FOOD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE!



You have been around food all of your life. You may have worked with food for many years, but do you really know what can go wrong and how to keep your food safe? Take this quiz and see!

- 1) Why is some chicken skin yellow and some white?
 - a) Chickens urinate through their skin. The amount of urine present determines the color.
 - b) The color is dependent on the food they are fed.
 - c) Poultry growers give their birds food coloring to make their skin turn yellow.
 - d) The color is genetically pre-determined.

- 2) Honey produced from the flowers of which plant can introduce a toxin to the honey, causing neurological problems very quickly?
 - a) Holly
 - b) Tomatoes
 - c) Rhododendron
 - d) Petunias

- 3) Cut leafy greens do not include the following:
 - a) Cilantro
 - b) Lettuces
 - c) Escarole
 - d) Cabbage

- 4) What should the Person in Charge do if a foodhandler reports that they have symptoms of vomiting or diarrhea?
 - a) Fire the employee
 - b) Restrict them to washing dishes only
 - c) Exclude them from working until symptoms resolve
 - d) Exclude them from working until employee is asymptomatic for at least 24 hours

- 5) Where can you find a list of disinfectants effective against Norovirus?
 - a) <http://www.vldhealth.org/divisions/environmentalHealth.html>
 - b) http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/list_g_norovirus.pdf
 - c) Either of the above

- 6) Is Ebola considered a foodborne illness?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

ANSWERS:

1. B. The food determines the skin color. The higher the quality of food, the more yellow the skin will become.
2. C. The nectar from the rhododendron flowers introduces a chemical called grayanotoxin to the honey. Within a few minutes to 2 hours after ingestion, the consumer will experience excessive perspiration, dizziness, low blood pressure and other neurological problems. Buying honey from a farmer with large production reduces the chances of concentrating the toxin.
3. a. Cut leafy greens also include escarole, endive and spinach once cut, shredded, chopped or torn. It does not include cilantro or parsley.
4. d. Employees must stay home for at least 24 hours after vomiting or diarrhea stop or they provide medical documentation without a diagnosis of Norovirus, Shiga-toxin producing E. coli, Hepatitis A, or Salmonella Typhi.
5. c. There is a link to the EPA's website on our page. Please follow the instructions of any product as required contact times will vary.
6. b. It is not normally spread by food in this country.