



Food Safety Works

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Preventing Foodborne Illness: Listeriosis

By Lea Schneider

This summer, the nation experienced a multi-state outbreak of listeriosis, which was traced to cantaloupe produced in southeast Colorado. The outbreak sickened more than 100 people and has killed 29. *Listeria monocytogenes* is a common bacterium found in the environment, especially in soil. The bacterium is hardy and can resist the effects of freezing, drying and some heat. Though the growth is slowed, *Listeria* can thrive under refrigerated environments as cold as 40°F.

Illnesses from *Listeria* are relatively rare, but can be fatal for individuals with weakened immune systems and the elderly. Pregnant women are at high risk and listeriosis may result in miscarriage or stillbirth even though the mother herself rarely becomes seriously ill. Most listeriosis cases in humans are the result of consumption of contaminated foods. The infective dose of *L. monocytogenes* is unknown but is believed to vary with the strain and susceptibility of the victim. Most healthy persons that are exposed to listeria bacteria usually show no symptoms.

The initial symptoms of listeriosis are influenza-like and include a persistent fever and muscle aches. Gastrointestinal symptoms may be experienced, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Other symptoms that have been associated with infection include headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions. The onset of symptoms ranges from 2 to 70 days after ingestion of the bacteria.

L. monocytogenes has been associated with such foods as raw milk and contaminated pasteurized milk, deli meats, hot dogs, cheeses, particularly soft-ripened varieties, ice cream, raw produce, fermented raw-meat sausages, poultry, raw meats and raw and smoked fish. Cooking foods to over 165°F will kill the bacteria. Other controls to help reduce the risk of listeria contamination and growth include:

- ◆ Keep refrigerators below 41°F. Ensure reheated foods are heated to greater than 165°F. Hot hold foods at temperatures above 135°F.
- ◆ Practice “First In First Out” for refrigerated foods. Ensure open packages of ready-to-eat foods and prepared foods such as deli meats, soft cheeses, salads and sauces are discarded after seven days.
- ◆ Maintain a clean, dry kitchen environment. Especially in refrigeration units. Wash and sanitize all equipment and utensils and allow surfaces to air dry thoroughly before storage.
- ◆ Thoroughly sanitize work surfaces before use. Ensure sanitizer is at the proper concentration: chlorine: 50-200ppm; quaternary ammonium: 150-400ppm.
- ◆ Wash hands thoroughly with warm water and soap, *before and after* handling food.
- ◆ Use gloves or utensils when preparing or handling ready-to-eat foods.
- ◆ Use food only from approved sources such as USDA inspected meats, pasteurized dairy products. Be aware of and comply with recall notices reported by the media.

To get more information about listeria see <http://larimer.org/health/ehs/index.asp>

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Guárdese de Peligros No Vistos en los Vegetales

Por Paul Rees

Los vegetales y frutas en los medios se están convirtiendo en algo común; o por lo menos las enfermedades que causan. Ya sean los melones de Colorado, la lechuga de California, o los chiles o tomates de México, parece que la gente se está enfermando al comerlos. Los datos de los centros de control de enfermedades sugieren que son responsables de pérdidas por \$39 mil billones debido a las enfermedades que causan. Éstas se pueden prevenir.

Lave perfectamente las frutas y verduras. Las que están sin procesar se deben lavar para quitar la tierra. Los productos como tomates, limones y limas pueden enjuagarse debajo de agua corriente limpia y esto puede ser suficiente. Sin embargo, muchos otros no son tan fáciles de limpiar, por ejemplo melones y patatas. Éstos pueden tener una cáscara áspera o mucha tierra. Un cepillo para vegetales será necesario. Cuando se cortan frutas y vegetales, el cuchillo puede mover bacterias o virus desde la cáscara exterior al interior. Por lo tanto, hay que lavar el exterior incluso si la cáscara o la piel no se van a comer. Si utiliza enjuagues químicos, use solamente los aprobados para alimentos y a la concentración especificada en la etiqueta.



Proteja el producto contra la contaminación cruzada. Lave y prepare las frutas y verduras en mostradores, mesas y tablas de cortar limpios y esterilizados. Hay que separarlos de las carnes crudas, de las aves y de los pescados. Obtenga tabla de corta y cuchillo limpios. Utilice buena higiene y prevenga el contacto con las manos descubiertas. Siempre lave las manos antes de comenzar cualquier preparación. La mayoría de las frutas y verduras frescas usadas serán servidas crudas así que hay que evitar el contacto con las manos descubiertas. Esto se logra usando guantes. Si son utilizados correctamente, presentan una barrera física entre el manipulador de alimentos y el alimento. Tenga presente que la mayoría de las enfermedades producidas por los alimentos reportadas en los E.E.U.U.

se asocian a prácticas higiénicas pobres de los manipuladores de alimentos.

Controle la temperatura del producto. Los melones y los tomates cortados son potencialmente peligrosos y requieren temperaturas por debajo de 41°F. Los de hoja verde cortados pronto serán agregados a la lista. Los tomates enteros, los melones y otros vegetales y frutas se envían y almacenan a temperaturas ambiente. Una vez cortados y preparados hay que refrigerarlos a menos de 41°F. Siga las prácticas de enfriamiento, las frutas y verduras cortadas o preparadas se ponen en cacerolas destapadas de metal que no tengan más de 2" de profundidad en un refrigerador, o pre-enfríe el producto antes de la preparación seleccionando del inventario del refrigerador el día anterior. Si las frutas y verduras pre-enfriadas o refrigeradas suben a más de 41 ° F durante la preparación, rápidamente enfriarlas a menos de 41°F usando cacerolas bajas antes de servir las. El mantener alimentos a estas temperaturas retardará o inhibirá el crecimiento de bacterias y ayudará a reducir las ocasiones de enfermedades producidas por los alimentos.

Finalmente, sea consciente y cumpla con los avisos e informes de devoluciones de parte de los surtidores y de los medios.

Food Safety Works Class Schedule

A course for food service workers that covers the basic requirements for safe food handling.

Fort Collins:

Larimer County Extension Office

1525 Blue Spruce Drive

Monday, January 9

Monday, February 6

Loveland:

Meals on Wheels

437 N. Garfield Ave.

Monday, March 12



All Classes 2:00—4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$30 per person

Pre-registration is required: Call 498-6008

Beware of Unseen Hazards with Produce

By Paul Rees

Produce in the media is becoming a common thing; or at least illnesses from produce. Be it cantaloupes from Colorado, lettuce from California, peppers from Mexico or tomatoes, it seems like people are getting sick eating produce. Data from the Centers of Disease Control suggests that produce is responsible for \$39 billion of health-related losses due to foodborne illnesses. Like all foodborne illnesses, illnesses caused by produce can be prevented.

Wash produce thoroughly. Unprocessed fruits and vegetables must be thoroughly washed to remove dirt. When washing produce such as tomatoes, lemons and limes, simply rinsing under clean running water may be sufficient. However, many types of produce are not so easy to clean, such as cantaloupe or potatoes. These may have a rough outer skin or have a lot of dirt on them. A vegetable brush is often needed for these items. When produce is cut, the knife used will move bacteria or viruses from the outside skin of a fruit or vegetable to the interior of the product. Therefore, it is important to wash the outside of all fruits and vegetables even if the peel or skin will not be eaten. If produce chemical washes are used, use only washes that are approved for use on foods and only at the concentration listed on the label.



Protect produce from cross contamination. Wash and prepare produce on counters, tables and cutting boards that are clean and have been sanitized. Keep produce separate from raw meats, poultry and fish. Just prior to washing and cutting, clean and sanitize food preparation sinks, counters and work tables. Get a clean cutting board and knife.

Use good hygiene and prevent bare hand contact. Always wash hands before starting any produce preparation. Most fresh produce used in food establishments will be served uncooked so like any other ready-to-eat foods bare hand contact during produce preparation must be prevented. This is usually

done by wearing or using gloves. When used properly, gloves put a physical barrier between the food handler and the food. Keep in mind, most foodborne illnesses reported in the U.S. are associated with poor hygienic practices of food handlers.

Control product temperature. Cut melons and cut tomatoes are potentially hazardous foods and are required to be held at temperatures below 41°F. Cut leafy greens will soon be added to the list as well. Whole tomatoes, melons and other produce items are often shipped and stored at room temperatures. Once cut and prepared they need to be held refrigerated at less than 41°F. Follow established cooling methods such as, cooling uncovered in shallow metal pans or containers that are no more than 2" deep in a refrigerator, or pre-chill produce before preparation by rotating stock into a refrigerator or walk-in cooler the day before. If pre-chilled or refrigerated fruits and vegetables rise above 41°F during preparation, rapidly cool them to less than 41°F using shallow pans and containers before service. Maintaining foods at refrigerator temperatures will slow or inhibit the growth of bacteria and will help to reduce the chances of foodborne illness. Finally, be aware of and comply with recall notices and reports from suppliers and the media.

Greening Your Restaurant:

By Katie Sall



Time to gear up for the holidays and start thinking about how to decorate. Many restaurants put up cheery lights both inside and outside for the holiday season. Restaurants, coffee shops and many other retail food operations want to appear lively and festive and pull out the decorations from years past. If your establishment has not done so already, it could be the year to make the switch to energy saving LED light strands instead of the older incandescent version. LED strands use as much as 90% less energy than older light strands. As energy costs continue to rise, this might be a great way to reduce utility bills this holiday season.

Don't throw away the old incandescent lights, RECYCLE them. Many places will take the old lights, free of charge, as well as offer vouchers and discounts on new energy saving LED light strands. Look for deals as the holiday approach: Ace Hardware stores, Sears, and Kmart are just a few places that have offered this exchange in the past.

Thumbs UP!

To the following full service, fast food, schools and catering facilities who made food safety a priority! The establishments below received a routine health inspection between July 1 and September 30, 2011. All received an EXCELLENT rating! At time of their inspection these establishments had no deep critical violations such as improper cooling or reheating, lack of hand washing, cross contamination, they made sure workers did not come to work sick, and practiced proper glove use to cover cuts and burns and to prevent bare hand contact with ready to eat foods.

4th Street Chop House, Loveland
Abbey of St. Walburga, Virginia Dale
Asian Café & Grill, Loveland
Berthoud Inn & Event Center
Burger King, Timberline Road, Fort Collins
Burger King, S. Shields Street, Fort Collins
Camachos, Wellington
Charlie L's Pub, Loveland
Cheesy Lee's Amazing Pizza, Estes Park
The Chocolate Rose, Wellington
Cisco's, Estes Park
Domino's Pizza, Estes Park
Elk Meadow RV Park, Estes Park
Estes Park Brewery
Harmony Café, Fort Collins
Island Grill, Loveland
LaPorte Pizza, LaPorte



Main Street Catering, Loveland
McDonalds, Timberline Road, Fort Collins
P.F. Chang's China Bistro, Loveland
Pho Lan, Loveland
Pizza Hut, S. Mason Street, Fort Collins
Pizza Hut, W. Mountain Ave, Berthoud
Pueblo Viejo Restaurant, Windsor
Qboba, E 29th, Loveland
Quality Inn & Suites, Fort Collins
Red Table Café, Fort Collins
Residence Inn by Marriott, Fort Collins
Sackits Hot Shot Catering, Fort Collins
Sammy Q's Gelatoland, Fort Collins
Stone Age BBQ, Estes Park
Taco Bell, S. College Ave, Fort Collins
Taharaa Mountain Lodge, Estes Park
Wendy's, S. College Ave, Fort Collins
Western Ridge Restaurant, Livermore
Wild Sage Deli & Catering, Fort Collins
Wild Wings N' Things, Fort Collins
Xanterra Dining Services, Estes Park

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