

# FOOD NEWS



VILLAGE OF  
**WHEELING**  
ILLINOIS




**FALL 2010**

## Safe Egg Handling

Recently there has been a large foodborne outbreak linked to eggs. It is widely known that eggs have the potential to be contaminated with Salmonella bacteria. If contaminated eggs are eaten raw or under cooked, the bacteria can cause foodborne illness. Salmonellosis can infect people of all ages, but the illness is most serious in young children, the elderly and individuals with a weakened immune system.




Because of the potential for foodborne illness, special precautions must be taken when preparing and serving eggs, egg products or recipes containing eggs. Following are some tips to help prevent foodborne illness associated with egg-containing foods.

### Keep It Clean

-  Discard any eggs that are broken, cracked or appear dirty.
-  Wash your hands with warm soapy water before and after handling eggs.
-  Properly, wash, rinse and sanitize utensils, equipment and work surfaces before and after contact with raw eggs and egg-containing foods.






### Keep It Cold


-  Store eggs in the refrigerator at 41° F or lower at all times. Do not store eggs at room temperature and do not store eggs next to the grill or cook line unless the product can be maintained at 41° F or lower.
-  All organic and free-range eggs must be stored at 41° F or lower.
-  Raw shell eggs must be stored below and away from ready-to-eat foods to avoid possible cross-contamination in the coolers.



### Cook Thoroughly

-  Thorough cooking is the most important step to ensure that eggs are safe for consumption. Make sure that eggs and products containing eggs are cooked to a minimum of 145° F. Use a food thermometer to check the final cooking temperature.
-  Use pasteurized egg products.
-  Pasteurized shell eggs or egg products shall be substituted for raw eggs in the preparation of foods such as Caesar salad, hollandaise or béarnaise sauce, mayonnaise, meringue, eggnog, ice cream and egg-fortified beverages.

### Label Menu Items that Contain Undercooked Eggs

-  Eggs can be served undercooked (below 145° F) when specifically ordered by the consumer. However, there is a risk of foodborne illness associated with eating soft-boiled, sunny side up, poached, over easy or soft scrambled eggs. There is also a risk of illness from foods made with raw or undercooked eggs including Caesar salad dressing, hollandaise sauce, soft custards, meringues on pies, mousse, raw cookie dough and beverages such as egg nog.

Therefore, the Illinois Food Code requires a consumer advisory be posted that warns the consumer that eating raw or undercooked eggs may increase their risk of foodborne illness. Call the Health Officer if you need the proper wording of the consumer advisory.

## Important Definitions for Food Service Establishments

There are two very important terms that Village Health Inspectors frequently use on routine inspection reports to define a specific class of food items. They are “potentially hazardous foods” and “ready-to-eat foods”. It is important that all food service personnel understand the meaning of these terms. Review this information with your food preparation employees.

**Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF's)** are foods that spoil easily and if not handled properly can cause foodborne illness. PHF's require special care and handling because they support the growth of microorganisms. Some examples of potentially hazardous foods are:

- ◆ Milk or milk products
- ◆ Meats, fish and poultry (cooked or raw)
- ◆ Eggs – whole raw in shell, hard boiled
- ◆ Shellfish and edible crustacean (shrimp, lobster, crab)
- ◆ Baked or boiled potatoes
- ◆ Cooked pasta
- ◆ Cooked rice – boiled, steamed, fried or Spanish style
- ◆ Tofu or other soy-protein foods
- ◆ Garlic in oil mixtures (raw or cooked garlic)
- ◆ Vegetables that have been heat-treated (partially or fully cooked)
- ◆ Raw seeds and sprouts
- ◆ Sliced tomatoes
- ◆ Sliced melons
- ◆ Synthetic ingredients (such as textured soy protein in hamburger supplement)
- ◆ Pies – meat, fish, poultry, natural cream, synthetic cream, custard, pumpkin and pies covered with toppings that support microbial growth.



**\*These potentially hazardous foods must be stored refrigerated at 41° F or below. When this product is heated, hold it hot at 135° F or above. All PHF must be dated as to date of preparation and be discarded after 7 days. If PHF are found without preparation date, by code, the health inspector must discard it.**

**Ready-to-eat foods (RTE's)** are edible without further washing, cooking or additional preparation. Some examples of ready-to-eat foods are deli meats, sandwiches, sour cream, bread, condiments and fruits and vegetables that have been cleaned and prepped. Ready-to-eat foods require special handling because they will be consumed without any further preparation. If a food service employee(s) is ill or doesn't properly wash their hands, they can contaminate ready-to-eat foods with viruses or bacteria. Consumption of the food may result in a foodborne illness. This is why **all RTE's shall be handled with gloves, tongs or other utensils to prevent bare hand contact with the food.**



### Ready-to-Eat Foods Word Search



T	A	C	O	S	R	T	A	O	H	S	T	S
O	G	H	U	H	G	A	C	H	G	A	Z	L
R	D	O	N	U	T	S	A	L	A	D	P	H
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I	D	O	D	L	G	I	A	I	S	R	T	H
P	S	A	D	C	W	S	I	E	H	E	I	E
S	T	I	T	G	R	A	H	C	R	N	A	U

- FRUIT
- BREAD
- HOT DOGS
- SUSHI
- SALAD
- SANDWICH
- PIES
- GARNISHES
- PIZZA
- TACOS
- CAKES
- DONUTS
- TORTILLA CHIPS
- HAMBURGERS



## Holiday Buffet Safety

It is once again that time of year when holiday parties and buffet-style dinners are served. Careful attention to the way food is served will help ensure that guests do not become victims of food poisoning. The following are some food safety tips to remember while preparing and serving your holiday buffet.

- ♦ All buffets must be protected with some type of food shield to protect the food from possible cross-contamination from customers.
- ♦ Keep the serving utensils in the food during service. Do not leave the utensils out unprotected.
- ♦ Arrange and serve food such as cheeses and deli meats on smaller platters rather than one large platter. You may keep extra platters in the cooler until needed. This will effectively maintain proper temperature of the foods.



- ♦ When serving a buffet style dinner, serve hot foods from chaffing dishes, tabletop steam tables or warming trays that maintain a food temperature of 135° F or above.
- ♦ If possible, keep cold foods on ice to maintain a temperature of 41° F or below.

- ♦ Whenever possible, do not refill food containers on the buffet by adding new product to old.
- ♦ **All leftover foods that were on the buffet table must be discarded.**
- ♦ Post a sign asking patrons to use a clean plate when returning for a second helping.



## Catering and Food Related Illnesses

With the upcoming holidays, several restaurants and some retail food stores will be providing some form of catering. There are documented cases of food borne illness outbreaks associated with catering operations. Some of the common violations found in these outbreaks were improperly cooked, cooled, stored and or transported foods.

The following guidelines will help to improve the safety of catered food:

- ♦ Make sure adequate cooling and refrigeration capabilities are available, particularly during times of peak demands – for example when several parties are scheduled.
- ♦ Be sure to use thermometers to monitor food temperatures during preparation, transportation, holding and serving.
- ♦ When transporting hot foods, maintain them at 135° F or higher; cold food should be kept at 41° F or colder. **DO NOT TRANSPORT POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS WITHOUT THE PROPER HOT OR COLD HOLDING CAPABILITIES.** Ice packs and ice blankets can be used between foods to keep them at 41° F or lower.



- ♦ If using an insulated container for hot foods, be sure the food is 135° F or higher **BEFORE** placing in the unit. Remember, these units are designed to hold foods at a given temperature, not to reheat food or bring foods up to temperature. The same applies for cold foods. Make sure the food temperature is below 41° F before placing it in a holding unit.

- ♦ Instruct employees on the importance of good hygiene, especially good hand washing techniques. Hand washing is one of the single most important means of preventing the spread of disease.
- ♦ When customers order catered foods, provide them with instructions for transporting in insulated containers and for keeping foods hot or cold when they pick up the order. Give them instructions on what to do with leftovers including instructions regarding reheating foods to 165° F before serving.
- ♦ Call your Health Inspector immediately if you receive any complaints regarding a possible foodborne illness from your catering operation.



## The Basics: Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill

You can help prevent food poisoning from bacteria and viruses by following four simple steps when you prepare food:



- CLEAN: Wash hands and surfaces often
- SEPARATE: Don't cross-contaminate!
- COOK: Cook to proper temperature
- CHILL: Refrigerate promptly

This newsletter is provided by your Village of Wheeling Health Division:

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**Serena Fried, Health Inspector ..... (847) 499-9048**

**\* Please share the information in this newsletter with all food preparation employees**

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**Attention Food Service Manager**

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