

Harwich Health Department

Food Program Newsletter

March 2014

ISSUE 1



Welcome to the first edition of the Food Program newsletter produced by the Harwich Health Department Inspectional Staff. We hope this newsletter becomes a source of valuable information. In the future you can look forward to reading about topics such as:

- Recent Recall Notices
- Upcoming classes and trainings
- Updates to regulations or codes
- Food safety tips

We would like to start a dialogue with our establishment owners. As a Health Department, we are more likely than not thought of as the “enforcement agency”, when in fact we would like to be thought of as a partner or resource. After all, we share a common goal: keeping food safe to eat. We are here for you to answer questions or concerns, just ask! Please share this newsletter with your staff or post in the employee area.

Have you met our Staff??

Paula Champagne...Health Director
Amy Morris...Sr. Health Inspector
Meggan Tierney...Health Inspector
Carol Genatossio...Executive Assistant
Patty Sampson...Administrative Assistant

We would love your feedback and comments on this newsletter.

We are available for questions or assistance, just call or email us. We are here to help!

Why we do what we do...

- Each year, 1 out of 6 Americans gets sick from foodborne disease and 3,000 die as a result
- Reducing foodborne illness by just 10% would keep 5 million people a year from getting sick
- Preventing a single fatal case of *E. coli* O157 infection would save an estimated \$7 million

“That’s an unacceptable price to pay for contaminations that are mostly preventable.”
– Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services

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Upcoming Trainings

Food Manager Certification

Eastern Food Safety has released their 2014 Spring Servsafe class dates. The class will be held in Hyannis on March 15th and April 16th. For other class locations, prices and dates, go to www.easternfoodsafety.com

The Cape Cod Cooperative Extension will be offering ServSafe classes in Barnstable in April and June. The one day re-certification classes will be held on April 14th from 10 am until 1:30 pm. The initial certification class is a two day class held from 8:30 am until 1:30 pm on both days. The April class will be held on the 7th and 14th and the June class will be on the 9th and 16th. Go to <http://www.capecodextension.org/nutrition-education-food-safety/servsafe> for more information or to register.

Natural Solutions will be offering a ServSafe class in Provincetown on April 23rd. They will be offering a class in Harwich as well, time and place to be determined, contact them for more info at: Natural-solutions@comcast.net

HACCP Manager Training

Eastern Food Safety is offering a HACCP Manager Course and Certification exam on March 12th. This exciting and *rare opportunity* will take place in Braintree. Please take advantage of this class which does not come along very often. Visit www.easternfoodsafety.com for more information.

4 Steps to Food Safety

CLEAN



Wash hands and surfaces often



SEPARATE



Separate raw meats from other foods



COOK



Cook to the right temperature



CHILL



Refrigerate foods promptly



Free Choke-Saver Training

The Medical Reserve Corps of Cape Cod will be hosting a FREE choke-saver training on March 25th. Class will be held at the Harwich Community Center at 10 am and again at 1 pm in Activity Room #2.

Pre-registration is required, so contact our office by email or phone to sign up!

DID YOU KNOW??

Are you interested in having a private food safety training session for your staff? The Cooperative Extension Service offers 1-2 hour training targeted towards food workers and wait staff. The certified Servsafe instructor will come to your establishment for a small fee and cover all the basics.

Contact the Health Department for more information.



Listeria

A rare but deadly germ

WHAT is it?

Listeria monocytogenes is a bacteria that can cause a serious infection called Listeriosis. Although lesser known than the more common food poisoning bugs, like Salmonella and E. Coli, *Listeria* is a germ that is worth getting to know.

WHERE does it come from?

Listeria is commonly found in soil and water. Animals can carry the bacterium without appearing ill and can contaminate foods of animal origin, such as meats and dairy products.

Because it lives naturally in animals, *Listeria* can be present in raw milk and foods made from raw milk. It can also live in food processing plants and contaminate a variety of processed meats.

When the bacteria get into a food processing factory, they can live there for years, sometimes contaminating food products.

The bacterium has been found in a variety of foods such as uncooked meats and vegetables, unpasteurized milk and cheese, processed foods including soft cheese and ready-to eat meats. Deli-meats, hot dogs, refrigerated

smoked seafood, raw sprouts and Mexican-style cheese are all potential sources.

WHY should we worry about it?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that *Listeria* is responsible for approximately 1600 illnesses and 260 deaths per year.

Unlike most bacteria, *Listeria* can grow and multiply in some foods even in the refrigerator.

The incubation period can be as short as 3 days, and as long as 70 days. This is a very hard bug to track, and the illness can last days to weeks once it starts. Symptoms include fever, stiff neck, confusion, weakness, vomiting and sometimes diarrhea.

WHO is most at risk?

The list for those most at risk is similar to many other food borne illnesses: Older adults, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems. The standout fact is that pregnant women are 20 times more likely than other healthy adults to get *Listeriosis*. This illness can be devastating because in some cases, the bacteria have been transmitted to the unborn child, leading to miscarriage, stillbirth, or life-long health problems.

HOW can we prevent it?

Cooking and re-heating to proper temperatures will kill the bacteria. It is important to wash all produce in a *clean* sink, with *clean* hands before storing in a *clean* container.

Keep on top of proper food storage: uncooked meat on the bottom, ready to eat foods on top.

As always, wash your hands!

Prevent Food Borne Illness With Clean Hands

Clean Hands Clean Conscience



We are continually updating the information on our website to include new trainings, resources and hot topics. We have made posters available on the website to help educate your staff. These are downloadable and can be laminated for long term use. You can access links to websites that offer new and exciting information.

Have you been to our website?

<http://harwichma.virtualtownhall.net>

Current Recalls:

To get up to date notices on Federal and Local food recalls, visit:

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/recalls-and-public-health-alerts/current-recalls-and-alerts>

There is an option to receive automatic email alerts or add the website to your favorites for quick access.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/listeria/sources.html>

Food Safety.gov:

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/poisoning/causes/bacteriaviruses/listeria/index.html>