

Food For Thought

Newsletter

Fall Issue

December 2011



DID YOU KNOW?

- ◆ When washing fresh produce, using clean, running water is actually the best way to remove bacteria. In fact, it's best not to use soaps or detergents, as they may linger on foods and are not safe for consumption.
- ◆ It's important to wash ALL produce, even if you're going to peel it, because it's easy to transfer bacteria from the peel or rind you're cutting to the inside of your fruits and vegetables.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov.

PUBLIC HEALTH
always working for a safer & healthier
SNOHOMISH COUNTY

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION NEEDED

The Food Safety program needs assistance from foodservice owners and operators to ensure the timely delivery of important food safety and Health District information. **Food Safety program staff will begin immediately to relay important information and inspection results via email, creating a more convenient and efficient information flow to you, our customers.** In maintaining this process to provide critical documents and information to Snohomish County foodservice owner/operators, it is essential that email addresses are up-to-date.

Please review or add an establishment email address on the 2012 permit renewal invoice.

LISTERIOSIS

What is listeria?

Listeria can be found in many foods. The most recent outbreak in 2011 was found in cantaloupe and lettuce. There have been 28 deaths and 133 illnesses nationwide from this latest outbreak. Listeria can be found in raw milk, poultry, ice cream, ready-to-eat meats such as hot dogs, deli or lunch meats, soft cheeses made from unpasteurized milk and raw sprouts. The bacteria can multiply in temperatures as low as 37 degrees but the ideal temperature for growth is between 86 and 100 degrees. The FDA advises to wash all fruits and vegetables under running water just before eating, cutting, or cooking, even if you plan to peel the produce first. Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.

Where does it come from?

The bacteria that causes listeriosis is common in wild and domesticated animals, as well as in soil and water. Vegetables, melons and meats can get infected if they come in contact with contaminated soil or manure. If you ingest the contaminated product, you may get sick. The elderly, pregnant women, newborns and adults with compromised immune systems are especially at risk.

What are the symptoms?

Listeriosis is characterized by symptoms similar to the flu and includes fever, chills, body aches, vomiting and stiff neck. Listeriosis is one of the most common causes of neonatal meningitis. Infants may have symptoms of loss of appetite, jaundice, rash and vomiting. Prompt recognition of the disease is necessary to avoid serious complications.

What can we do about it?

As listeria is able to grow at temperatures as low as 32 degrees, refrigeration is not a complete protection against its growth. However, thorough cooking of foods will kill the bacteria. Steps to avoid cross-contamination would include properly using your sanitizer and keeping facilities and equipment clean and dry. This can significantly help to control the spread of the bacteria. If there is a recall or any suspicion that there is listeria in your food -- be it lettuce, cheese, or hot dogs -- **throw it out.** Do not try to wash the food because there is no way to ensure that the listeria is just on the surface. Listeria cannot be seen and it does not change the way the food looks, so always play it safe.

HOLIDAY FOOD SAFETY TIPS

- ✓ **Fresh or frozen?** There is no quality difference between a fresh or frozen turkey, although fresh turkeys have shorter shelf lives.
- ✓ **Never defrost a turkey on the counter.** The safest method for thawing frozen turkey is in the refrigerator, keeping it in the original packaging and in a shallow pan on the bottom shelf. Allow refrigerator thawing rate at 24 hours per 4 to 5 lbs. Cook immediately after thawing. Do not refreeze.
- ✓ **Take your temp.** The single most important thing to know is that no matter the cooking method, the turkey must be cooked to the proper internal temperature, as measured with a food thermometer. The minimum internal temperature should be 165 degrees.

FOOD WORKER CARD CLASS SCHEDULE

For off-site class locations and general information, call the food worker information line at 425.339.5260.

COST: \$10.00 (CASH ONLY)

PLEASE BE ON TIME: CLASSES LAST APPROXIMATELY 90 MINUTES, WITH NO BREAKS. DOORS CLOSE PROMPTLY WHEN CLASSES BEGIN. NO LATECOMERS ADMITTED. **ALL CLASSES WILL BE CANCELLED ON HOLIDAYS.**

AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2011, PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING CLASS CHANGES:

ENGLISH - CLASS LOCATIONS AND TIMES

EVERETT

FIRST AND THIRD THURSDAYS OF EVERY MONTH - 10:00 AM AND 2:30 PM

SNOHOMISH HEALTH DISTRICT, 3020 RUCKER AVENUE, EVERETT 98201 (FIRST FLOOR AUDITORIUM)

THIRD THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH - 6 PM

(ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME FOR STREET PARKING)

LYNNWOOD

2ND AND 4TH TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH - 10:00 AM AND 2:30 PM

ELKS LODGE, 6620 196TH STREET SW, LYNNWOOD 98036

(PLENTY OF PARKING AVAILABLE)

SPANISH - CLASS LOCATIONS AND TIMES

EVERETT

FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH - 10:00 AM

THIRD TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH - 2:00 PM

SNOHOMISH HEALTH DISTRICT, 3020 RUCKER AVENUE, EVERETT 98201 (FIRST FLOOR AUDITORIUM)

(ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME FOR STREET PARKING)

NEWS FROM SNOHOMISH HEALTH DISTRICT

✓ **FOOD WORKER CARDS AVAILABLE ON-LINE!**

Snohomish Health District is now offering the Washington State food worker card class **online**. Take the Snohomish County Food Worker class and test now at: www.foodworkercard.wa.gov

✓ **CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS**

As an added convenience, beginning in December, 2011, Snohomish Health District will have the ability to accept debit and credit cards to pay for food service establishment fees.

✓ **SERVSAFE TRAINING**

This training will be offered in 2012. Check www.snohd.org for class dates and times.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT NEWSLETTER

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