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E. coli 0157:H7 Linked to Romaine Lettuce in 2018

Multistate outbreak impacted local food establishments

The E. coli outbreak's likely source was lettuce that came from the Yuma, Arizona growing region. The outbreak began in March of 2018 and was declared over on June 28, 2018. Contamination could have occurred at any point along the growing, harvesting, packaging and distribution chain before reaching customers.

Laboratory testing of canal water in the Yuma, Arizona region was conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That testing revealed the same strain of E. coli 0157:H7. The CDC continues to investigate the outbreak to learn more about how the E. coli bacteria could have entered the water, and ways the water could have contaminated romaine lettuce.

The last shipments of romaine lettuce from the Yuma growing region were April 16, 2018. The CDC has reported that the lettuce associated with this E. coli 0157:H7 outbreak is no longer available.

The following advice is important to reduce the risk of foodborne illness from E. coli bacteria:

- Clean hands thoroughly with soap after using the restroom and before handling and preparing food.
- Rinse and clean vegetables and fruit prior to consumption.
- Cook meat and poultry to the required temperature to reduce foodborne illness.

During the three-month outbreak:

- **210 people were infected by the E. coli bacteria strain across 36 states.**
- **96 people were hospitalized, including 27 who suffered from kidney failure.**
- **There were five deaths reported in Arkansas, California, Minnesota and New York linked to this foodborne illness outbreak.**
- **While there were no deaths in Idaho, 12 people were associated with the outbreak.**



WE'RE A



To protect the health of **everyone** at CDHD, no use of tobacco or vaping is allowed anywhere on our property.

Thank you for your cooperation.

For more information, visit cdc.gov/ecoli/2018/o157h7-04-18/index.html

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Food Review is sent biannually, free of charge to all licensed food establishments in our health district. We hope to include news of interest and importance. Topic ideas or articles written by the readers are welcome to be sent to: publicinfo@cdhd.idaho.gov. Extra copies of the newsletter are available at your local Health Department office.



Accredited Food Protection Manager Requirement Now in Effect

The accredited food protection manager certification requirement began July 1, 2018 and requires a manager at every licensed food establishment in Idaho. The intent of the rule is to have a knowledgeable person in charge, who can recognize an out-of-control food safety risk factor and make a time-sensitive correction to prevent foodborne illness. A knowledgeable accredited food protection manager in charge will reduce the risk of foodborne illness in your establishment. A displayed certification document is an important part of this new requirement.

An accredited food protection manager must meet the following criteria:

1. Have supervisory authority to direct and control food preparation activities.
2. Have supervisory authority to correct food safety violations.
3. Have successfully completed one of the nationally accredited food safety examinations. Examinations are provided by one of the following organizations:
 - 360 Training®
 - Above Training/State Food Safety®
 - National Registry of Food Safety Professionals®
 - Prometric®
 - National Restaurant Association's Accredited Food Manager Certification

An accredited food protection manager does not need to be present at the establishment during all hours of food service and preparation; they may designate another person to serve in this role.

One example of how this situation might arise is a corporate level person having met the accredited food protection manager criteria. If the corporate level person has responsibility for a large number of stores, he or she can then designate an area or regional manager to cover responsibilities for a smaller number of stores. In this case, the area or regional manager would be expected to meet the accredited manager criteria.

If a food establishment operator/manager requests a variance from the rule, the following operational factors will be considered:

1. What types of foods are being prepared and what steps are taken to prepare the food?
2. What types of foods are being served?
3. Is the establishment a temporary food establishment (TFE) and what foods are being prepared and served?

Factors that Influence the Growth of Bacteria:

FATTOM

- 1. **Nutrient Content (Food) F**
- 2. **pH (Acidity) A**
- 3. **Temperature T**
- 4. **Time T**
- 5. **Oxygen..... O**
- 6. **Moisture M**



1. Nutrient Content

Bacteria need food and have a metabolism that allows survival and growth. These microorganisms require certain basic nutrients for growth and metabolic functions. Nutrients include water, a source of energy, nitrogen, protein, vitamins and minerals. Foodborne microorganisms can derive energy from carbohydrates, alcohols and amino acids. Varying amounts of these nutrients are present in foods that help bacteria grow.

2. pH

Bacteria have a specific pH range that is best for growth. The range of pH for bacterial growth is different for the many types of harmful bacteria. To simplify, this is the measure of acidity in foods. The range of pH values is 0–14. 0–7 is acidic, 7 is neutral and 8–14 is basic. The Idaho Food Code describes a food with a pH value of less than 4.6 as being not favorable for bacterial growth. Some microorganisms can survive at a pH of 4.2. Some foods that have a pH below 4.6 are whole tomatoes, orange juice, limes, grapes, and apples. It is important to wash fruits and vegetables because harmful bacteria can be on the outside.

3. Temperature

Various bacteria have specific temperature ranges that are prime for growth. 41°F to 135°F is the temperature danger zone favorable for bacterial growth. When potentially hazardous food is in this temperature range, bacteria can grow and multiply quickly with time. Monitoring the time that food is in the temperature danger zone is critical to prevent serving food that can make people sick.

4. Time in Danger Zone

Time/Temperature Controlled for Safety (TCS)

Time is a crucial consideration. Pay attention to the time a product is in the temperature danger zone. When TCS food is in the temperature danger zone, time must be recorded and monitored to prevent harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying. The rule

of thumb is that TCS food can be in the danger zone for a maximum of four (4) hours or less. A **maximum of six (6) hours** is allowed when the TCS food is initially 51°F or below and never gets above 70°F.

5. Oxygen

Some harmful bacteria require oxygen and some do not. Salmonella, E. coli, C. jejuni, Bacillus cereus, S. aureus and Shigella are some bacteria that use oxygen and cause foodborne illness. Clostridium botulinum is a bacteria that grows without oxygen. When the oxygen requirements for bacteria are in the optimum range, bacteria will grow when the other parameters are in their favor too.

6. Moisture

Microorganisms need water in available form to grow in food products. The control of the moisture content in foods is one of the oldest preservation strategies. Food microbiologists generally describe the water requirements of microorganisms in terms of water activity.

Water activity is a measure of available water for bacteria. A food that has a water activity of 0.85 or higher supports the growth of harmful bacteria.

Some foods that have a low water activity value are fruit jams and jellies, jerky, parmesan cheese, honey, dried fruit, cereal and fruit cake.

Note:

The best way to prevent growth of harmful bacteria in the food you serve is to monitor temperatures of food in refrigeration units, including the upper compartments of prep units and make sure it is held at 41°F or below. **Keep cold food cold.**

Cooked foods must reach the proper cooking temperature to kill harmful bacteria and then held hot at 135°F or above. **Keep hot food hot** to prevent the growth of bacteria.



Basic Food Safety Concepts Taught in Six Short Videos

Knowledge in food safety is what counts in preventing foodborne illness in food establishments. Recognizing foodborne illness risk factors that are out of control and taking action to correct the hazard will prevent foodborne illness. A key ingredient is food service employees who can recognize a food safety risk factor out of control. These staff will contribute to the success of your establishment. There are many food safety training resources available to you that can provide basic food safety knowledge to train employees.

The Central District Health Department website provides short basic food safety concept training videos that employees can watch from a computer or device. The free series includes six videos that are five to eight minutes long and provide essential information to keep food safe. These short videos provide good general knowledge about harmful bacteria, hygienic practices, cross contact contamination, temperature control, and cleaning and sanitizing.

Find the videos at cdhd.idaho.gov/eh-food-training.php and scroll down to *Basic Food Safety Video*.

Daily Commercial Dishwasher Checks — Who is Responsible?

Commercial Dishwashers

Sanitation is, of course, a main concern for every food establishment. Washing and sanitizing kitchenware properly in a 3-compartment sink used to be a nearly impossible chore for a thriving restaurant. Thankfully, commercial dishwashers have taken the hard work out of someone's hands.

Commercial dishwashers offer an efficient and easy solution to cleaning and sanitizing kitchenware, tableware and utensils. One of the downsides to the commercial dishwasher is that prolonged, heavy use will eventually cause wear and tear and restaurant owners can rapidly run into trouble if a machine is not cared for as it should be.

If your establishment is using a commercial dishwasher, it is very

important to test the machine every day. In most cases, the manufacturer of the unit or restaurant equipment service company will come out to service the machine on a weekly or monthly basis. However, **this is not a satisfactory testing method!** An employee of the establishment should test the machine **daily** to make sure it is sanitizing correctly.



Did You Know? **#16 Food-contact surfaces; cleaned and sanitized** (from food establishment inspection report), is the second most common food safety violation observed during an inspection?

High vs. Low Temp Commercial Dishwashers

High Temperature

Commercial dishwashers that use super-heated water to wash/sanitize kitchenware are known as high temp dishwashers. A high temp machine will use considerably more energy than a low temp machine due to the power it takes to heat up the water. Additionally, these machines do not have to use sanitizing solution; the heated water is hot enough to properly sanitize the dishes. High temperature dishwashers must achieve a final rinse temperature of at least 160° F “at the plate” and need to be certified by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF).

The beginning of the workday is best for your daily check of the final rinse temperature. Use an irreversible registering temperature indicator (dishwasher thermometer or heat



tape) to check the water temperature during the final rinse cycle. If using heat tape, follow the manufacturer's recommendations for use. It is important to continue checking water temperature daily as continuous use may damage the booster heater in the dishwasher, requiring maintenance or replacement. Stop using the machine and call a repair company if the final sanitizing rinse does not reach at least 160° F “at the plate.”

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Central District Health Department

Environmental Health
707 N. Armstrong Pl.
Boise, ID 83704-0825

Upcoming Food Safety Trainings

National Restaurant Association's Serv-Safe Certification Course

Fulfills Accredited Food Protection Manager Certification requirement. Classes fill quickly. Paid registration is required. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Cost: \$125 per student

- **Wed., Aug. 8**
- **Wed., Sept. 5**
- **Wed., Sept. 19**
- **Wed., Oct. 10**
- **Wed., Nov. 7**
- **Wed., Nov. 21**

Idaho Food Safety & Sanitation Course

8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Cost: \$49 per student

- **Tues., Sept. 18**
- **Wed., Nov. 14**



Location for both courses:

In Ada County –
Central District Health Department
707 N. Armstrong Pl., Boise

With 10 or more students, we will travel to Boise, Elmore and Valley counties by appointment.

TO REGISTER: Call CDHD's Environmental Health Department at 208-327-7499