



On the Menu.....

Environmental Public Health

Spring 2009
Issue II

DEAR FOOD SAFETY PARTNERS:

One of the most powerful tools we have in speeding up the economic recovery is to spend locally. One way to do this is to purchase local products at your grocer, eat out at local restaurants, or visit one of the four farmers' markets in Clark County. The editorial on page 3, written by our nutrition specialist, provides more information on how you can support sustainability in our community.

The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate food safety information and updates to local food industry and support agency staff. We appreciate input on the content and welcome any ideas or suggestions for future articles. We hope it is both informative and useful. Please send comments to me at gary.bickett@clark.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Gary Bickett

Food Safety Program Manager

In This Issue

- Ill Food Workers
- Melons & Foodborne Illnesses
- Buying Locally

Did you know? Our Food Safety program staff conducted 4,564 food establishment inspections last year for an average of 18.25 food facility inspections per day.

Staff also respond to food borne illness complaints, are required to work some weekends and evenings for temporary events, and are required to work after-hours/on-call 2-3 weeks each year.

MEET OUR STAFF:



Top row: Lissa Boynton, Tami Holyk-Crane, Gary Bickett
Middle row: Joan Lacey, Yvonne VanNostran, Bruce Scherling
Bottom row: Erin DeSemple, Sandi Yorke (not pictured—Suzanne Blair)

STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK!

by Joan Lacey, CCEPH

WORKING when healthy is one of the most important factors in preventing food borne illness. When feeling sick, you should not work with food.



The germs that are making you sick could possibly spread to food you are preparing and make others ill.

It is the responsibility of the food service operator to have established policies and procedures for ill food workers.

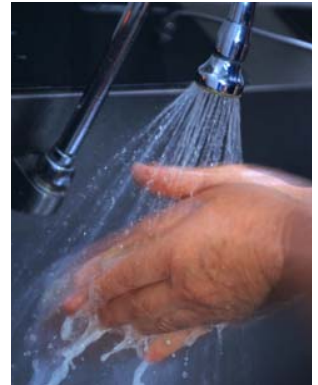
Food workers may not work if they have:

- ◆ **diarrhea, vomiting or jaundice;**
- ◆ a **diagnosed** infection that can be spread through food, including *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *E. Coli*, or Hepatitis A;
- ◆ **infected**, uncovered wounds;
- ◆ **continual** sneezing, coughing or runny nose.

Food workers must tell the **Person in Charge** if they are sick.

SICK FOOD WORKERS SHOULD GO HOME. If food workers are unable to go home, they may be given duties that do not involve handling food or cleaning food contact surfaces. This may include taking out the trash, mopping, sweeping, cleaning restrooms or bussing tables.

In general, to prevent germs from getting into food, always wash hands **TWICE** after using the toilet. Wash once before leaving the restroom and a second time when you get back to the kitchen. Each time, wash with soap and warm water and thoroughly **scrub**. Be sure to scrub under fingernails, between fingers, and up the arms. **Rinse** hands and **dry** with a paper towel. The entire hand wash procedure takes about 20 seconds, which is longer than most people realize.



Did you know? In 2006, a line cook at a Michigan restaurant who showed up to work ill and vomited in a kitchen waste basket was linked to a Norovirus outbreak that made 364 patrons ill



MELONS & FOODBORNE ILLNESS

by Dacia Carver

FRUIT is an important part of a balanced diet. National guidelines recommend that we eat at least 5 fruits and vegetables each day. Fresh fruit, like many other foods, can pose a risk if not prepared or stored properly.



Following some simple guidelines will help keep fruit fresh as well as safe.

Following some simple guidelines will help keep your fruit fresh as well as safe.

- ✓ When you buy cut melons, be sure they have been buried in ice or displayed in a refrigerated case, not just displayed on top of ice. Uncut melon does not need to be refrigerated.
- ✓ Before cutting, the outer surface of the melon should be washed with clean water to remove surface dirt.
- ✓ Hands and all equipment and utensils (cutting boards, knives, etc.) need to be washed thoroughly with hot soapy water, and rinsed.
- ✓ Cut melons must be refrigerated at 41° F or below.
- ✓ Other fruits (such as oranges, apples, lemons, and pineapple) are higher in acid and not potentially hazardous.

BUYING DIRECT FROM LOCAL FARMS by Tricia Mortell, CCPH

Some Clark County restaurants have seen the benefits of serving local produce since more consumers have begun to question where their food comes from. Consumers are not only concerned about food safety and quality but are interested in supporting local farmers and food producers. In a recent survey of consumers purchasing food at the grocery store, 45% said they strongly favored locally grown produce.

Clark County residents continue to see more and more options for eating healthfully and consuming local foods when eating away from home. Many restaurants promote their practice of buying locally, attracting consumers looking for this option, including Burgerville, Mint Tea, Tommy O's Pacific Rim Bistro & Aloha Café, Hudsons's Bar & Grill and Lapellah.

Certainly challenges exist for buying and using locally grown foods. Prices are typically higher and many farmers find that the small quantities restaurants are looking to buy do not justify expenses related to production or delivery. But as the interest in local food increases, consumer demand could help offset these challenges and improve the ability for farmers and restaurants to work together in supporting a more sustainable local food system.

Currently there is no organized farm to restaurant network available in Clark County. Having this type of collaboration would make local purchasing easier. However, there are internet sites that can help in locating farmers and growers willing to sell their produce:

- ◆ WSU Extension maintains a list of small farmers in and around Clark County http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/farms/locate_search.asp
- ◆ SW Washington Community Supported Agriculture <http://swwa-csafarms.com/>.



Upcoming PIC Training for 2009:

May 14	12:30 pm—4:30 pm
June 24	8:30 am—12:30 pm
August 19	8:30 am—12:30 pm
September 17	12:30 pm—4:30 pm
October 22	8:30 am—12:30 pm
November 19	12:30 pm—4:30 pm

Where is PIC Training?

All classes are held at:

Clark County Public Health
1601 E. Fourth Plain
Vancouver WA

For more information contact:

Sandra Brown
360-397-6060, ext 7712

Did you know? To receive current food safety issue updates via email, just send a message, including the name of the food establishment, to: maureen.walker@clark.wa.gov



Clark County Public Health

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FOOD WORKER CARD TESTING DAY & TIMES

Check out these websites!

- ✓ <http://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/index.asp>
- ✓ <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/food/>
- ✓ http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safhttp://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/food/

When: *Monday, Tuesday & Friday
8:30 AM to 3:00 PM*

Wednesday
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Where: *Clark County Public Health
1601 E. Fourth Plain Blvd.
Third Floor, Room A338*

- *Registration closes at 3:00 PM*