



The State of the Plate



Fall 2007
Volume 1 Issue 3

Rhode Island Food Safety Task Force, University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension
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RI Department of Health, Office of Food Protection Update

By Tom Nerney



New RI Food Code Scheduled for October release

The Department of Health held a public hearing on September 10, 2007 to hear comments on the new proposed Rhode Island Food Code. An additional two weeks were allotted for interested parties to submit comments. If no critical issues are identified with the proposed regulations, they will replace the existing RI Food Code by the end of October.

Rhode Island food safety regulations have not been updated since 1994. The proposed changes will bring Rhode Island Code in line with the Food and Drug Administration's National Model Food Code, which has been updated every four years since 1993. To view the proposed regulations along with the major changes between the current RI code and the proposed code visit:

http://www.health.ri.gov/environment/food/retail/retail_food.php.

School Inspection Reports Now Available to the Public on HEALTH's Website

Parents may now find obtaining a copy of school cafeteria inspection reports easier than receiving a copy of their child's report card. In August of this year, inspection reports were made available on the Health Department website at

<http://www.health.ri.gov/environment/food/schools.php>. The move follows a Federal mandate requiring school cafeterias to receive two inspections each year, post the most recent copy of the inspection report, and make copies available to the public upon request.

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Pathogen Page: *Salmonella*

By Kim Langelo



Reptiles (iguanas, lizards, snakes, turtles) can harbor Salmonella and everyone should wash their hands immediately after handling a reptile. If you have young children, reptiles are not recommended as pets. Keep reptiles away from the kitchen area and your food.

Salmonella is a bacterium that in most people causes diarrhea, stomach pain, and fever starting 1 to 3 days after they become infected. The symptoms usually go away in a week, but in some people the diarrhea can be severe enough to require hospitalization. A small percentage of people infected with Salmonella may develop long-term health issues.

Salmonella is commonly found in the intestinal tract of animals, and people can become infected from eating foods contaminated with animal feces. Foods commonly associated with Salmonella infection include undercooked poultry and undercooked or raw egg products. Because of the potential for serious illness from Salmonella, the RI Department of Health has the following recommendations to reduce the risk of infection:

- Thoroughly cook poultry products to a minimum of 165 °F.
- Cook eggs until both the yolk and white are firm.
- Avoid consuming raw unpasteurized egg products.
- Use eggs that have been pasteurized for recipes, such as Hollandaise sauce, Caesar salad dressing, eggnog, that call for raw egg products.
- Keep eggs refrigerated.
- Throw away cracked or dirty eggs.
- Wash hands and cooking utensils with soap and water after handling raw meat and eggs products.
- Clean and sanitize work surfaces that have come in contact with raw meat or eggs.

For more information on Salmonella go to:

US Food and Drug Administration's Bad Bug Book:
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~mow/chap1.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Salmonella *enteritidis*:
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/salment_g.htm

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Salmonellosis:
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/salmonellosis_g.htm

A small percentage of individuals who are infected with Salmonella will go on to develop pains in their joints, irritation of the eyes, and painful urination. This disease, called Reiter's syndrome, can last for months or years, and possibly lead to chronic arthritis.

Can you Spot The Food Code Violation?

Answer on page 4



Food Facts

Fried corn bread or "Johnnycake," is a New England specialty, especially in Rhode Island. First made by Pilgrim women and dating back to 1621, it was made from cornmeal, hot water and salt, then poured onto a hot stone or griddle to cook. Cornmeal was used during this time because flour was both scarce and expensive.

The origin of the name johnnycakes (jonncakes) is somewhat ambiguous and appears to have no relation to a man named John. They've been referred to as journey cakes because they could be carried on long trips in saddlebags and baked along the way. Some historians claim that their original name was Shawnee cakes, but colonists slurred the words, pronouncing it as johnnycakes (Rhode Islanders today would have thrown an "R" into the word, pronouncing it Shorenee cakes). Other historians think that "janiken," an American Indian word meant "corn cake," which could be the possible origin.

School Reports. Continued from Page 1.

Availability of inspection reports to the public over the Internet became possible in January of 2007 when the Health Department began using a new computerized inspection system created for the Office of Food Protection by Garrison Enterprises. Food Protection agents and third party auditors now enter their inspection reports in the field on computers and submit them to the office electronically. Prior to January, inspection reports were written on paper. If the public wanted a copy of an inspection report, they had to file a request in writing and drive to the Department of Health to pick it up or wait for it to arrive by mail.

Now it only takes a couple of clicks of the mouse button to obtain school inspection results. Anyone can create their own personal account containing a list of the schools for which they are interested in receiving future inspection results. Once an inspection report is received and approved by the Health Department, an email containing a link to the inspection results is automatically sent to everyone that listed the establishment in their account. The Health Department plans on expanding this program over the next few months to include all restaurants and markets.

Spot the violation answer from page 3

In addition to some glaring issues with the condition of the physical facility and equipment there are problems with the utensils used to portion the rice. Section 3-304.12 of the Food Code requires in-use utensils to be stored in one of the following ways:

- In the food with their handles above the top of the food container;
- In food that is not potentially hazardous with their handles above the top of the food with containers that can be closed such as bins of flour;
- On a clean portion of the food preparation table or cooking equipment only if the utensils and food-contact surface of the equipment are cleaned and sanitized at the required frequency (at least every 4 hours at ambient temperatures);
- In running water of sufficient velocity to flush particulates to the drain;
- In a clean, protected location if the utensil, such as ice scoops, are used only with a food that is not potentially hazardous; or in a container of water if the water is maintained at a temperature of at least 135°F.



Storing utensils in chemical sanitizer solution or stagnant water is not permitted unless the water is kept above 135F. In addition, there is bowl stored in the water next to the scoop. This is an unacceptable utensil for this purpose because it is not designed to prevent bare hand contact with the rice, a ready-to-eat food.

The 2005 FDA Model Food Code provides the following public health reasons for these requirements:

Once a food employee begins to use a utensil such as a ladle, spatula, or knife, that has been previously cleaned and sanitized, it is then considered an in-use utensil. In-use utensils, used on a continuous or intermittent basis during preparation or dispensing, must be cleaned and sanitized on a schedule that precludes the growth of pathogens that may have been introduced onto utensil surfaces. In-use utensils may be safely stored in hot water maintained at 135oF or above during intermittent use because microbial growth is controlled at such temperatures. A food utensil should be designed and used to prevent bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food or to minimize contact with food that is not in a ready-to-eat form. On-site evaluations can be made to determine if a utensil is improperly designed for the task or whether a food employee is misusing an appropriately designed utensil.

FIELD TRIP FOOD SAFETY....Don't miss the bus!!

by Elizabeth Bugden, Certified Food Safety Specialist, Kids First

School Food Safety is a highlight for September, National Food Safety Month! Kids First, RI Departments of Health and Education, along with University of Rhode Island have many resources to support Health and Wellness Sub-Committees, PTA/PTO, Booster Clubs, etc., Contact Elizabeth Bugden at (401) 751-4503 or ebugden@kidsfirstri.org for resources.

Parents, teachers, and students need to plan field trip food so that the food will be safe to eat after being in a lunch box/bag for four or more hours. Foods need to be either non-perishable or they need to be kept cold (40 F or below) or hot (140 F or above). Keep the following in mind when planning a field trip that includes a meal or snack.

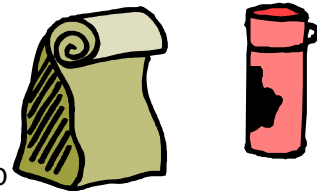
Easy to pack foods that do not require refrigeration...

- Sunflower butter and jelly sandwich
- Soy butter and banana sandwich (beware of soy allergy)
- Whole fruits
- Dried fruits
- Unopened cans of fruit or shelf-stable fruit cups
- Nuts and seeds (beware of allergies)
- Vegetables such as carrots or celery
- Unopened boxes of pasteurized fruit or vegetable juice
- Breadsticks, pretzels, bagel, rice cake, muffins
- Granola, trail mix
- Unopened cans of pudding or shelf-stable pudding cups
- Crackers



Store food items...

- Out of direct sunlight and away from an engine

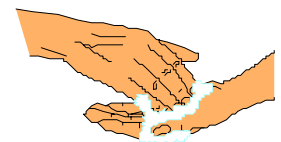


Keep Cold Foods Cold...

- Use individual insulated bags or a large cooler for the group
- Pack sandwiches with a frozen juice box or a frozen ice pack
- Freeze sandwiches overnight (Coarse textured breads don't get soggy as they thaw). If packing milk, use a thermos or buy milk from school; Be sure it has been packed with ice or ice packs
- Sandwiches made with lunchmeats, poultry, tuna fish and eggs need to be kept cold.

Always remember to...

- ✓ Wash your hands before handling food (before making field trip food and before eating field trip food)
- ✓ Wash fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Wash utensils and containers thoroughly with soap and warm water, and rinse after each use





14th Annual Food Safety Workshop Presents the 2007 Rhode Island Food Code

2 Identical Sessions Offered:

Wednesday, October 24, 2007 – Tyson Amphitheater, HAC Bldg., Harborside Campus, Johnson and Wales University, Providence, RI

or

Tuesday, October 30, 2007 – Coastal Institute, Bay Campus, University of Rhode Island, Narragansett, RI

AGENDA- Morning Session Highlights of 2007 RI Food Code

8:30 am	Registration/Refreshments
9:00 am	Welcome & introductions Lori F. Pivarnik, PhD Nutrition & Food Sciences Dept. University of Rhode Island
9:15 am	"State of the Plate" Background on the 2007 RI Food Code Ernie Julian, PhD, Chief Office of Food Protection, RI Department of Health
9:45 am	2007 RI Food Code Highlights -Review of Responsibilities of a Certified Manager - Employee Health and Hygiene - Temperature Control
10:30 am	Break
10:45 am	-TCS Foods (Time/Temperature Control for Safety) -Employee Illness Reporting - Date Marking
11:45 am	Panel Discussion
12:15 pm	Adjourn

AGENDA - Afternoon Session

Food Safety Manager Certification Short Course

1:00 pm	Food Safety Review Martha Smith Patnoad, MS, CFSP CE Professor/Food Safety Education Specialist University of Rhode Island
1:45 pm	HACCP at Retail Sam Wong, PhD Food Safety Consultant/Editor MD Consulting West Boylston, MA
2:00 pm	Break
2:45 pm	HACCP at Retail (cont'd)
4:00 pm	Adjourn

2007 Rhode Island Food Code Workshop CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Please Type or Print Clearly

(Pre-registration required)

Registration Deadline: Friday, October 12, 2007

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Telephone: () _____

Email address: _____

I will attend:

Session 1: Providence Oct 24 am _____ Full day _____

Session 2: Narragansett Oct 30 am _____ Full day _____

AM Only: \$20.00 (approved for 3 CEUs towards certified food safety manager instructor renewal)

Full day: \$65.00 (approved for certified food safety manager renewal)

Total amount enclosed _____

Make checks payable to: URI Cooperative Extension
Federal ID# 05-6000522

Check or money order only. NO purchase orders.

NO REFUNDS

Mail to:

CE Food Safety Education Program
Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences
112B Ranger Hall
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881

For additional conference information contact:

Martha S. Patnoad, 401-874-2960, mpatnoad@uri.edu

Lori F. Pivarnik, 401-874-2972, pivarnik@uri.edu

Ask the Task Force

By Linda Kender and John Rogers

Q Should poultry be washed prior to cooking to prevent illness? (Axel T., Exeter, RI)

A. It is unnecessary to rinse poultry prior to cooking, since cooking the product to the proper temperature will kill the bacteria commonly associated with raw poultry. Rinsing before cooking can actually increase the risk of cross-contamination in your kitchen, as you are handling the product more, placing it in your sink, etc.

Q. I just purchased a turkey with a pop-up thermometer. How accurate are they at indicating when the product has reached a safe temperature and is done? (Bailey N., Providence, RI)

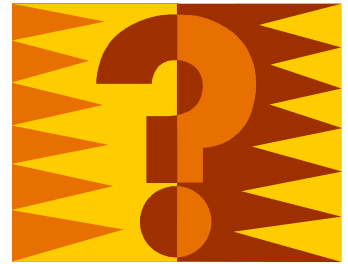
A. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), pop-up thermometers have been around since 1965. They are constructed from a food-approved nylon, with a stainless steel spring and firing material inside the device. The tip of the stem, which is embedded inside the firing material, melts at a particular temperature. This releases the stem, which is then “popped up” by the stainless steel spring. The USDA asserts that these thermometers are reliable to within 1 to 2 degrees F if properly placed in food. However, they do recommend that other parts of the food be checked with a conventional food thermometer.

Q. I was at a festival recently, where they were serving unpasteurized/untreated apple juice. I didn't see any signs posted regarding the potential hazards associated with consuming unpasteurized or untreated juice. Is this in compliance with the food code? (Diego T., Lincoln)

A. According to the Rhode Island Food Code, there are documented cases of foodborne illness throughout the United States that were associated with consumption of juices contaminated with microorganisms such as E.coli, Salmonella, Shigella, and Cryptosporidium. Chapter 3-404.11 of the RI Food Code states that juice packaged in a food establishment shall either be treated under a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan, and if not treated, shall be labeled with the following: “WARNING: This product has not been pasteurized and, therefore, may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems.”

Section 3-801.11 of the RI Food Code states that prepackaged or unpackaged juice that has not been treated under a HACCP plan may not be served or offered for sale to a “highly susceptible population,” i.e. persons who are more likely than other people to experience foodborne disease because they are immunocompromised, preschool age children, or older adults. For the purposes of the criteria that apply to juice, section 3-801.11 states that “children who are age 9 or less and receive FOOD in a school, day care setting, or similar facility that provides custodial care are included as HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE POPULATIONS.”

Given the above information, if unpasteurized juice were indeed being served at a festival, a sign should be posted to inform the public of the hazards of consuming unpasteurized/untreated apple juice. Furthermore, if the event hosted a highly susceptible population as defined above, unpasteurized/untreated juice should not be served at all.



The Food Safety Task Force wants to be your resource for answers to food safety questions. Please email questions to foodsafe@etal.uri.edu



Consumer Corner I: FOODBORNE ILLNESS PREVENTION DURING THE HOLIDAYS

By Kim Langelo

With the holidays upon us come plans for entertaining friends and family. When preparing your menu items, it is important to keep food safe to prevent foodborne illness from ruining your holiday event. Be sure to keep food safe for both you and your guests by following these food safety guidelines:

- **Clean** by washing hands and food-contact surfaces often, since bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and contaminate cutting boards, kitchen utensils, sponges and countertops.
- **Separate** and don't cross-contaminate--don't let bacteria spread from one food product to another. This is especially true for raw meat, poultry and seafood. Keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods.
- **Cook** foods to proper temperatures. Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness.
- **Chill:** Refrigerate promptly. Public health officials advise consumers to refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying. Refrigerators should be set at 40 F or below and the freezer at 0 F. The accuracy of the settings should be checked occasionally with a thermometer.

Other food safety tips:

- Thaw turkey in your refrigerator (40⁰ F or below) and allow approximately 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds.
- Cook whole turkeys to a minimum of 165⁰ F. The temperature of stuffing should be 165⁰ F.
- Check a turkey for doneness by inserting a food thermometer into the inner thigh area near the breast of the turkey, but not touching the bone.
- Use pasteurized eggs to prepare eggnog, since unpasteurized eggs may contain bacteria that can cause illness.
- Ensure adequate refrigerator space for storage of planned menu items both before and after dinner is served.
- Do not leave perishable foods at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

Additional information on safely roasting a turkey can be found at the following:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/Lets_Talk_Turkey/index.asp

For information on reporting a foodborne illness, please visit our Website at:

<http://www.health.ri.gov/environment/food/FoodReport.php> or call the RI Department of Health at 222-2750.

Consumer Corner II: Halloween Food Safety Tips

By Kim Langello

Halloween is a fun time for children. The following tips will help prevent illness or injury during this festive time.

Treat Tips:

- Don't allow children to eat any candy before it is inspected for signs of tampering such as ripped packaging, pinholes, discoloring or any other unusual appearance.
- Parents of young children should also remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies or small toys.
- To help prevent children from snacking while trick-or-treating, feed them a light meal before they go.
- Children should only eat commercially prepared and packaged snacks. Homemade candy or baked goods should be discarded.
- Consider alternative treats such as crackers with a peanut butter or cheese spread, packaged fruit treats, or microwaveable popcorn.

Halloween Parties:

- If juice or cider is served to children at Halloween parties, make sure it is pasteurized or otherwise treated to destroy harmful bacteria. Juice or cider that has not been treated should state so on the label.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Hold all hot food at 140 F or above after cooking.
- Ensure there is adequate space in your refrigerator to keep cold foods at 40 F or cooler.
- If there is insufficient space in the refrigerator, store cold drinks in a cooler on ice.
- If having your party catered, ensure that the company is reputable. To determine if a catering company or food establishment is licensed, visit the RI Department of Health's Web site at:
<https://healthri.mylicense.com/Verification/Search.aspx?facility=Y>



Did you know?

The Celtic people started Halloween over 2000 years ago. They feared October 31st, as it was the night of their festival, Samhain (pronounced sow-in), Lord of the Dead. This date also marked the last day of the Celtic calendar. Every year the Druids (Celtic priests) would try to please Samhain by making sacrifices to him. Huge sacred bonfires would be lit, and the Celtic people would dress in costumes to frighten the spirits, that were believed to roam freely on this night. They also left food outside their homes to please the spirits, so that they could be left in peace. By A.D. 43, the Romans had conquered the majority of Celtic territory. During their four hundred year rule, two festivals of Roman origin were combined with the traditional Celtic celebration of Samhain (later termed Eve of All Saints (All Hallows Eve): All Saints and All Souls Day. The three celebrations were called Hallowmas, and All Hallows Eve became known as Halloween.

Task Force Member Spotlight

By: Tom Nerney

Each Newsletter issue will recognize a member of the Rhode Island Food Safety Task Force. In this issue we are pleased to introduce Bill Flynn.



Bill Flynn

Since April 2006 Bill Flynn has served as Director of Community Programs at the R.I. Community Food Bank, where he's responsible for the Food Bank's relationships with its network of member agencies. He also manages its Community Kitchen job training program and Kids Café after-school meal program. He represents the Food Bank as a member of the R.I. Food Safety Task Force. He says that "serving on the Task Force has been educational and has introduced me to the network of food safety experts in Rhode Island...I've learned a lot just by osmosis at Task Force meetings and its Annual Conference last year." Besides hosting Task Force meetings that are held at the Food Bank, Bill has assisted with editing this Newsletter.

A social worker with a master's degree from the University of Michigan, Bill's previous work has been as a community organizer and program developer with several community agencies including most recently nine years at the George Wiley Center. He has also worked at the Urban League of RI and the former OIC job training programs in Providence.

"Working at the Food Bank and being responsible for our network of agencies that distribute food and prepare meals has taught me a lot about the importance of food safety," he says. He added, "My previous experience with food and nutrition issues had been as an organizer at the Wiley Center, where we won expanded school breakfast and summer feeding programs around the state."

Bill says that the Food Bank is placing increased emphasis on ensuring that its member agencies follow proper food safety practices. "Through a contract with Kids First, we are able to offer member agencies workshops on food safety topics," he says. He added that "seeing increasing numbers of recalls of food products has made our agencies more aware of food safety, and they welcome more training and information on that important topic."

To learn how you can help the RI Community Food Bank, visit their Website "How You Can Help" at: http://www.rifoodbank.org/matriarch/MultiPiecePage.asp?Q_PageID_E_9_A_PageName_E_HowYouCanHelp

If you are interested in joining the Task Force, please send an email to Martha Patnod at: foodsafety@etal.uri.edu

NSF International Launches New Restaurant Award

By Tom Nerney

NSF is rolling out Dine Safer™, a new restaurant food safety certification program in Rhode Island. This first-of-its-kind, voluntary program is designed to provide a means for restaurant operators to communicate to customers and health officials that they have implemented a comprehensive plan to prevent foodborne illness.

To obtain certification, establishments must submit a plan to NSF that addresses all Federal and State regulations as well as best food safety practices. Once NSF has validated the plan, their auditors conduct an on-site inspection to verify that the establishment's plan is implemented and followed. If the on-site verification is satisfactory, the establishment is issued a license to use the NSF Mark in conjunction with the Dine Safer™ certification. Firms that achieve this level of food safety excellence may display the NSF Mark within the facility as well as on any printed materials such as menus, placards, packaging, promotions and advertising. NSF then conducts surveillance through regular, unannounced inspections to ensure ongoing adherence to the approved food safety plan.

The Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of Food Protection fully recognizes and supports this program. "I encourage all Rhode Island restaurants to participate in this innovative program", said Ernest Julian, Ph.D., Chief of the Office of Food Protection. "We intend to recognize those restaurants that have achieved this award on the Health Department Website so that the public can identify establishments that meet best industry food safety practices," Julian added.

For more information regarding this program, contact Patrick Pimentel, General Manager, NSF Retail Food Safety Programs, at 734-827-6893 / Pimentel@nsf.org.



Consumers may soon look for the Dine Safer mark shown above before deciding where to eat.

RI Food Safety Task Force Members

RI Department of Health, Office of Food Protection (401) 222-2750

Ernest Julian, Ph.D., Chief
Kimberly Langello, Emergency and Illness Investigation Coordinator
Thomas Nerney, Compliance Officer

RI Community Foodbank (401) 942-6325

Bill Flynn, Director of Community Programs

RI Department of Education (401) 222-8955

Kathy Kendall, Nutrition Program Specialist

RI Department of Corrections (401) 462-5142

John Rogers, Administrator, Food Processing and Distribution

Johnson and Wales University

Linda Kender, Associate Professor & Food Safety Liaison
Fred Faria, Associate Professor, Hospitality College
Suzanne Vieira, Associate Professor and Department Chair of the Culinary Nutrition Program in the College of Culinary Arts

Rhode Island College (401) 456-8477

Carol Mier, Dietitian and Food Safety Instructor

University of Rhode Island (401) 874-2960

Martha Patnoad, CE Professor/Food Safety Specialist
Lori Pivarnik, PhD, Coordinator, Food Safety Education/Research Programs

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Dale Venturini, President/CEO

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Kids First (401) 751-4503

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SSTAR of RI, Inc.

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TSgt. Matthew J. Leone, Public Health Technician

Autocrat Premium Coffee & Syrup

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