

## HYGIENE COURSES IN CANTONESE & MANDARIN

Nearly 30% of the D graded premises in Dunedin are Asian operated and only 5% of Asian restaurants in Dunedin have A grades. In an attempt to reduce the number of Asian food premises with low food safety grades, food hygiene courses in Cantonese and Mandarin have recently been approved by the Dunedin City Council.

The courses have the same content as NZ Qualifications Authority approved courses but unfortunately do not meet authority registration requirements due to the English literacy difficulties. Never-the-less, they still meet the DCC's training requirements for commercial food outlets in Dunedin.

If you are interested in attending a course please phone 0800 500 416.

### 食品卫生安全中文课程

在但尼丁，约百分之三十的D级食品场所是亚洲人经营；并且，仅百分之五的亚洲食品场所获得A级。为了减少较低食品安全级别的食品场所，最近，在但尼丁市开设了被但尼丁市政局认可的食品卫生安全中文课程。

这中文课程提供的内容跟新西兰资格委员会认可的课程是相同的。遗憾的是，由于参加者英文读写能力问题，它没能符合资格委员会的注册要求。虽然如此，它依然符合但尼丁市政局对商业食品场所的培训要求。

如果你要参加这课程，请联系下面电话：0800 500 416。



## MEET THE BUGS - NOROVIRUS

With the recent outbreak at Dunedin hospital, **Norovirus** has hit the headlines! **Norovirus** is a leading food borne illness and whilst the hospital outbreak has not been linked with food, the recent publicity surrounding **Norovirus** makes it the prime "bug" to discuss.

**Norovirus** affects the stomach and intestines, causing an illness called gastroenteritis, or the "stomach flu". Symptoms usually begin 15 to 50 hours after ingestion of the virus, and include nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhoea accompanied by abdominal cramps. Some people also complain of headache, fever/chills, and muscle aches. Symptoms usually last 1-5 days.

People can become infected with the virus in several ways, including:

- eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with **Norovirus**;
- touching surfaces or objects contaminated with **Norovirus**, and then placing their hand in their mouth;
- having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms (for example, when caring for someone with illness, or sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is ill).

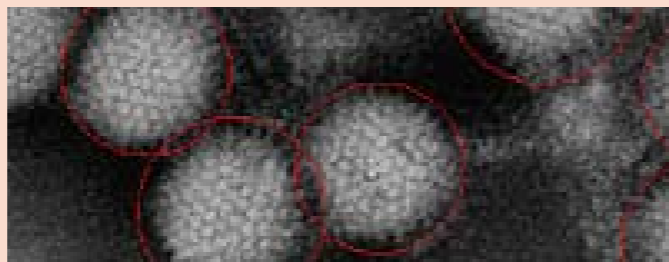
Food and drinks can very easily become contaminated with **Norovirus** by direct contact with contaminated hands (poor personal hygiene) or work surfaces that are contaminated (poor premises cleaning). Although the virus cannot multiply outside of human bodies, once on food or in water, it can cause illness.

Some foods can be contaminated with **Norovirus** before being delivered to a food premises. Several outbreaks have been caused by the consumption of shellfish harvested from contaminated waters. Other produce such as salads and frozen fruit may also be contaminated at source.

People working with food who are sick with **Norovirus** are a particular risk to others, because they handle the food and drink many other people will consume. Since the virus is so small, a sick food handler can easily contaminate the food he or she is handling. It is vital therefore the food handlers showing any symptoms of gastroenteritis stay off work for at least 48 hours after they feel better and are symptom free.

### How can you prevent a Norovirus outbreak in your food premises?

- Ensure any food handlers showing signs of the "stomach flu" are excluded from work for at least 48 hours after being symptom free to prevent them contaminating the kitchen and/or food. This should be stated in your sickness policy and records of illness must be kept for future reference.
- Thoroughly wash all fruit and vegetables coming into your premises.
- Purchase shellfish from reputable sources. Decline to accept shellfish harvested in areas where sewerage contamination may have occurred.
- Ensure staff follow strict hand washing procedures after using the toilet and before handling food items.
- Use a commercial grade sanitiser and the correct chemical dosage on food working surfaces and equipment.



DUNEDIN CITY  
COUNCIL

*Kaunihera-a-rohe o Otepoti*

ENVIRONMENTAL  
HEALTH

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## WELCOME!

...to the 40th issue of the Safe Food Newsletter. We hope you have made it through the cold winter months and are looking forward to the long summer days ahead.

Over the past few years our office has seen numerous staff come and go, and earlier in 2008 we reached an all-time low in staffing levels. Thankfully however we have now successfully recruited new officers and trainees and are back to our full quota. You may still find you get visits from different officers from time to time but this should work itself out as we get our districts back on track. In the mean time don't forget to contact us at any stage if you have any concerns or questions. You may not speak to the officer you know, but you'll still get all the service you need.

And as a wee reminder - please display your registration certificate (with its appropriate grade) in full sight of the public. Failing to display your certificate is an offence under the Bylaw and you could be subject to a \$20,000 fine. Council are currently improving their website and will be displaying the names and grades of all registered food premises at some stage in the near future - another incentive to get those good grades. We'll keep you updated as to when this will happen.



## GREASE TRAPS

Poorly maintained or cleaned grease traps can cause foul odours and attract flies. With summer fast approaching, the potential for such problems escalates hugely. Therefore to prevent such nuisance problems, Council Trade Waste staff will shortly begin to inspect all grease traps in the Dunedin City area.

They will be checking for appropriate maintenance and cleaning levels along with documentation indicating when and who cleaned the grease trap, so please ensure such records are kept at your premises. You will be required to apply for a Trade Waste Consent if you haven't already got one and Council staff will advise you on this process. Please note that the use of insincaraters (garbage grinders or macerators) is not permitted for the disposal of solid wastes from commercial food premises to the sewerage system (in accordance with the Trade Waste Bylaw).

For those businesses with under-bench type grease treatment systems, please ensure that you follow the manufacturer's instructions for their operation and care.

If you have any further enquires please contact the Trade Waste Section of the Dunedin City Council on 477 4000



## THERMOMETERS

Using a food thermometer is the only way of knowing your food is at the proper temperature – whether you are cooking, cooling, reheating, or storing food. There are two basic types of thermometers readily used in the food industry, the probe thermometer (digital or dial) and infrared (laser) thermometers.

### Probe thermometers

Probe thermometers are designed to give an accurate internal temperature reading. They are not designed to measure air temperatures in refrigerator, freezer or warming units (for example) and may not give an accurate measurement, for example; when measuring between cartons or solid packs upon delivery. When probe thermometers are placed inside fridges or freezers the accuracy of the measurement may suffer because of condensation and water damage to the instrument. Before and after use, probe thermometers must be suitably cleaned and sanitised.

The best thermometers to use for most foods are digital probes. They measure food quickly and because it is measured at the tip of the probe, digital thermometers can measure both thin and thick food products.

Dial probe thermometers take longer to record temperatures and because the reading is averaged along the probe length, they cannot accurately measure some thinner food products such as meat patties, hamburgers etc.

### Infrared thermometers

Infrared thermometers are scanning instruments designed to measure the surface temperatures of food products. They are fast and provide a non-contact reading therefore cleaning and sanitising the units is not required between food products. As they measure the surface temperature only, they are not suitable for cooking processes where internal temperature

verification is important. They are excellent however for measuring hot and cold display or storage units and for incoming goods temperature verification.

### Calibration

Food thermometers must be checked regularly to ensure they are working properly. Obviously if the thermometer is not working accurately, it won't give an accurate reading.

Professional calibration is the most accurate option but can be an expensive exercise especially for small to mid-sized food operations. Another easier and cheaper option is the ice water or boiling water 'do it yourself' method of calibration. This works well for probe thermometers and infrared thermometers but obviously the infrared thermometer does not need to be submerged as does a probe. Simply aim the infrared thermometer at the surface of the ice/boiling water vessel and record results.

### Ice Point Checks

Fill a large glass with crushed ice and add clean water until the glass is full. Stir continuously and submerge the thermometer probe. Wait for 30 seconds. Ensure the probe does not touch the side or bottom of the glass. Record the result. An accurate result should be 0°C.

### Boiling point Checks

Bring clean water to the boil in a deep pan. Submerge the thermometer probe and wait for 30 seconds. Ensure the probe does not touch the side or bottom of the glass. Record the result. An accurate result should be 100°C.

Another option is to compare the results of two or more thermometers tested on the same food product at the same time. If they show varying results you know at least one of the thermometers isn't working accurately and you may need to get them checked.

For professional calibration, refer to the manufacturer or place of purchase.



## STOCK ROTATION

On many of our routine inspections we find problems with the lack of adequate stock rotation measures for food. Satisfactory rotation of stock, to ensure that older food is used first, is essential to avoid spoilage and applies to chilled and frozen foods as well as other non-perishable products. Daily checks should be made on short-life perishable food stored under refrigeration, while weekly checks of other foods may do. In general, you should apply the first in first out rule.

For some products, stock rotation is made easier with product date marking, eg; "use-by" or "best-before" already marked on your incoming goods or products. For others that don't require a "use-by" date or are prepped on your premises for future use, you should use your own coding system so you know exactly how fresh or old each product is. This can be as simple as placing a sticker on the food container to which it relates, with the products prepped on date as well as its discard date. That way everyone knows just how old the product is and when any remaining product must be discarded.

Foods with an expired "use by" date, which you are returning to the supplier for credit, should be clearly marked to show they are not intended for sale. Or place them in a clearly marked container.

## DATE MARKING

The intention of date marks on products for consumers (either you or your customers) is to provide a guide on the shelf life of a food product in terms of food quality. In other words; how long the product may be kept under appropriate storage conditions before it begins to deteriorate and become a possible risk to human health.

Most packaged foods with a shelf life of less than 2 years must be date marked, with the exception of individual portions of ice cream, or for food products in small packages (with a surface area less than 100cm<sup>2</sup>) where there is no food safety concern.

A date mark will include one of the following; "use-by", "best-before", "baked on", or "baked for", followed by a date consisting of the day and month for products with a shelf life of less than 3 months or the month and year for those greater than 3 months.

Foods that are date marked with a "best-before" date indicates the food should be consumed by this date to ensure it remains at premium quality. The product can continue to be sold after that date provided the food is not damaged, deteriorated or perished.

Foods that are date marked with a "use-by" date should not be consumed once this date has passed and are prohibited from being sold after this date because they may pose a risk to health.

The terms "baked-on" and "baked-for" dates relate to bread with a shelf life of less than 7 days.

As well as an appropriate date mark, a food label must also include a statement of any specific storage conditions required to ensure that the food will keep until the date indicated by the date mark: eg: store in normal dry conditions. It must also include appropriate directions for the subsequent use and storage of the food, where the food requires it for health and safety reasons; eg: refrigerate after opening.

## CAN OPENERS

Can openers are important kitchen tools and come in a vast variety of shapes, sizes and quality. But regardless of their design, they can easily harbour bacteria and grime if poorly cleaned and could potentially contaminate a product if poorly maintained. So here are some tips for safe can opener care.

- Regularly check the cutting blade and compression parts are sharp and in good repair. Discard any openers with blunt or damaged cutting blades as they could leave dangerous jagged edges once the can is open and/or cause slivers of metal which could potentially contaminate your food products.
- Don't allow the grease, which in some cases tends to settle on the cutting mechanism over a period of time, to accumulate. This can drop off and contaminate the food item being opened.
- Use can openers with magnetic lid lifters so the lids do not fall off into the can once opened.
- Carry out regular cleaning and servicing of your can opener, according to the user manual (manufacturers instructions).



### DAMAGED CAN OPENER PROVES COSTLY!

*Serving up a pie containing a metal sliver has proved costly for a Wanaka bakery after being convicted (in August 2008) under the Food Act for selling food that was injurious or harmful to health. After buying a breakfast pie from the bakery, the customer required emergency surgery to remove the sliver of metal from his stomach and spent 11 days in hospital.*

*Expert opinion obtained proved that a damaged can opener that was being used at the bakery produced metal slivers such as that found in the pie. The bakery pleaded guilty and was ordered to pay nearly \$11,500 in fines and reparation.*

## THE NEW FOOD RULES AND WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU

Food legislation, as you all currently know it, falls under the Food Act and all its subsidiary laws; eg: Food Hygiene Regulations. As part of the Domestic Food Review, Government has agreed to update our food laws to make them simpler and to ensure operators deal with the risks more effectively. A new Food Bill will replace this current legislation, and instead of the responsibility for food safety being placed on inspectors to find any problems, responsibility will move to the food operator who must demonstrate how they manage food safety. Before the new law becomes mandatory, the NZ Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) and local Councils are providing operators of takeaways, cafes, restaurants and caterers, an opportunity to get ready for the changes by taking part in the new system voluntarily. This involves using a new Food Control Plan (FCP) - a folder containing a record of procedures that your business will follow to manage food safety including record charts for cleaning, training etc.

For small to medium sized businesses, off-the-peg (ready-to use) FCPs will be developed and will be available from Council or downloaded from the NZFSA website at [www.nzfa.govt.nz](http://www.nzfa.govt.nz). These will be simple, fill in the box type template plans, with modification required to particular activities only when needed. Once approved, your FCP will be registered with Council and an Environmental Health Officer will check that your business is following its Plan on, at least, an annual basis. Larger businesses will need to develop their own custom-made FCP and will be registered with the NZ Food Standard Authority.

The voluntary system came into effect in July 2008, and will remain in place until the new Food Bill is passed, during which time there will be training, updating sessions and information material provided. The first round of implementation will cover restaurants, cafes and caterers, and other sectors will be notified in due course of their expected implementation dates.

