



**DUNEDIN CITY
COUNCIL**

Kaunihera-a-rohe o Otepoti

**ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH**

safe food newsletter

PROTECTING, PROMOTING & ENHANCING THE HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE OF DUNEDIN

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Welcome!

...to the 41st issue of the Safe Food Newsletter. We trust you have had a good summer, all be it a very short one, and are now readying yourselves and your businesses for winter. With the colder weather upon us, we wish to remind you to be aware of vermin issues. Rats and mice often seek out dry and warm environments over the winter months and can sneak in through the tiniest of gaps. So as a precaution we recommend you up-the-ante on pest control. Lay more baits or traps and vermin proof the premises e.g. seal up possible entry points such as gaps around drains, pipes, under doors etc and regularly check for signs of activity. It is important to record your findings and any actions taken for future reference. Should you feel the problem is beyond your control, do contact a pest control firm for professional advice or service.

You will all have heard by now about the Swine Flu. Whilst this disease is not spread via food it is important to read the information below to ensure you and your staff are taking adequate precautions against contracting or spreading winter ailments such as this or other seasonal flu's.



Survey

You will find a number of attachments enclosed with this newsletter including the Safe Food Newsletter Satisfaction Survey form. Our newsletters are developed to help you but we need to know if they're what you want. If you have any additional comments or suggestions about what you would like to see in these newsletters, please let us know. With your input we can focus on information you wish to find out more about and make the newsletter more valuable to you. So please complete the survey and return the form to us (postage is provided) by Friday 19 June 2009. Any response will be gratefully accepted.





PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND HEADWEAR

There has been some concern raised lately regarding the rather lax attitude of food handlers to the wearing of protective clothing and in particular the use of suitable head coverings where necessary. And in fact over the last couple of weeks, we have followed up on several 'hair-in-product' complaints.

Whilst the food operator must provide staff with suitable protective clothing, all food handlers have some responsibility in terms of wearing it and attention to this basic requirement is necessary to reduce the risk of food contamination.

Protective clothing (smocks, aprons, t-shirts etc) must be clean, suitable to the nature of the premises and adequate to protect the food against contamination. Effective headwear to restrain hair from touching food or food contact surfaces is also required where necessary, such as during the main stages of food production.

Protective clothing is intended to protect the food and to prevent street clothing from coming into contact with the food products. Cardigans or jerseys can be put on under the protective clothing but not vice versa. Wearing protective clothing in non-food preparation areas such as in the car going home, defeats the purpose of having it. Protective clothing should be used exclusively on the food premises and handlers should change on arrival and before leaving the premises. Suitable lockers or cupboards must be provided for clothing storage when not in use. And remember that protective clothing is not worth wearing unless it is kept clean!

Staff wearing suitable clothing and presenting a professional image for your business creates a positive impact and reinforces a standard of conduct that customers expect in today's food industry. It shows patrons that you run a clean and hygienic business and surely that's in your best interests.

CLEANING OF CLOTHS, TOWELS ETC

Re-usable tea-towels, sponges, dishcloths, and the like, often harbour sizeable amounts of food particles and moisture and are therefore great for growing bacteria and other nasties. Because they may be contaminated with high levels of microbes they are capable of transferring these organisms onto food preparation surfaces.

Obviously, you can't clean with a dirty cloth. Simply rinsing these cloths under hot water doesn't kill most bacteria and can in fact cause further cross-contamination issues. Leaving used cloths to soak in a bucket of bleach in the kitchen all day may sound effective but it's not necessarily that clear cut. So what do you need to do?

Ideally disposable cloths are your best option. Once used, they are simply discarded and replaced by a new one. Another preferred option is to employ the services of a commercial cleaning company to launder your cloths. These companies specialise in this area but before securing their service, ensure the company understands your requirements and can provide you with suitable documentation outlining the process and chemicals used.

For those of you laundering your own re-usable cloths, to ensure they are thoroughly sanitised, washed and dried between tasks we recommend you follow these steps:

Soak your cloths in a pre-wash sanitiser such as diluted bleach or napsan for example. Follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding dilution rates and soakage times. This is critical as the sanitiser will only work effectively at specified dilutions and for a set period of time. Stronger dilution rates or extending the soakage time does not mean a more thorough sanitising process. In fact it can cause your cloths to deteriorate and break down requiring you to replace them more often.

Rinse the sanitising solution off the cloths and wash thoroughly in hot, soapy water. Some pre-wash soakers are strongly alkaline and rinsing the cloths prior to washing will protect your washing machine linings from corroding. If you are using your domestic washing machine at home, please ensure your business items are kept well separated from your personal, domestic items at all times. Do not mix loads.

Dry thoroughly either in a drying machine or by hanging in the sunlight. UV helps whiten your cloths and supplies further degree of disinfection. Ensure the cloths are completely dry before re-using them.

Store your clean cloths in a clean cupboard or drawer to ensure they are not contaminated prior to use.



FOOD HANDLER TRAINING

The Food Safety Bylaw 2005 requires all food handlers to complete a professional training programme in food hygiene. There are several training organisations in Dunedin that provide courses appropriate to meet the bylaw requirements. They are;

The Otago Polytechnic	Phone 477 3014 (see information sheet enclosed)
The Open Polytechnic of NZ	Phone 0508 650 200
Agri Quality NZ Limited	Phone 0508 001 122
QSM	Phone 0800 800 417 (see information sheet enclosed)
Guthrie Consultants Ltd	Phone 477 8844

Several other organisations offer training courses but may have conditions attached such as requirements to purchase additional products/ services or may not be approved by the NZ Qualifications Authority. If in doubt please contact us on 477-4000 and we can assist with pointing you in the right direction.



WHAT GRADE ARE YOU?



Early in 2009 all food premises grading were placed on the Dunedin City Council website. This means anyone can look up the grade for any individual premises or get a list of premises under a specified grade. So far it has received well over 30,000 hits in the short time since being launched. This shows that the public are quite curious about food premises grades and may even help determine which premises they utilise and which premises to avoid.



We acknowledge that a premises grade may change from one inspection to the next and will endeavour to update the site daily to ensure grades are as correct as possible. Please note that only the grades are stated, any details pertaining to your inspection are NOT included.



To access this site simply log on to www.dcc.govt.nz. The food grade search is under the popular links column.



REGISTERED FCP BUSINESSES

We're hoping you've all heard by now about the upcoming changes to food legislation in terms of the implementation and registration of Food Control Plans (FCP). Currently the process is voluntary and relates only to those serving food ready to eat such as cafes, restaurants, catering operations etc. For more information refer to your previous newsletter Issue 40 November 08 or contact our office on 477 4000.

We would like to congratulate our first volunteer businesses who have registered their Food Control Plan and are awaiting their first audit visits from us.

- Taste Mates
- Velvet Burger – George Street and the Octagon
- L & Ms Coffee Pot
- Ma Masinas
- Cargills Hotel
- Huntsman
- Phoebes
- Luna Bar
- Alibi
- Little Hut Cafe

Special congratulations go to Palms Restaurant who are the first in Dunedin to have registered their FCP, received their initial audit and been approved by the Dunedin City Council.

Well done and we look forward to seeing more businesses coming on board.



FOOD ALLERGIES

It's very important for all food operators to be aware of food allergies and to take them seriously. This is because when someone eats a food they are allergic to, even in the tiniest of amounts, their immune system can suddenly produce an allergic reaction. The symptoms may be mild (rashes, hives, itching, swelling, etc.) or severe (trouble breathing, wheezing, loss of consciousness, etc.). Scientists estimate that approximately 80,000 New Zealanders suffer from food allergies.

Strict avoidance of the allergy-causing food is the only way to avoid a reaction. Sufferers can, of course, select which packaged products they can eat by reading the ingredients labels. But, if a product doesn't have a label, how do they know if it is safe?

It is important that customers are able to make informed choices when choosing products that might contain allergenic ingredients.

If you make a dish from scratch, you will know what goes into it. But remember that you will need to think about each of the ingredients you use and what they contain. You also need to consider what you use for example, to thicken a sauce, as a topping or garnish, in a salad dressing etc.

It's very important to check the ingredients of anything you buy-in, such as breads, desserts or sauces. Don't rely on what you think is in these products because foods that can cause severe allergic reactions can turn up in products where you might not expect them. For example



peanuts or nuts can be used in pesto, sauces can contain milk or flour containing gluten, soyabean flour can be in many food products, such as burgers, sausages, cakes, pastries and biscuits etc

So if someone with a food allergy asks you whether a dish contains a certain food, you should never guess the answer. Always check the ingredients carefully and if you can't find out then say you don't know. Find out the information the customer wants and let them decide if they can eat the food.

Copies of these posters are available free of charge from our office. Just give us a call and we can send you as many as you need.

meet the BUGS *Swine Flu and Seasonal Flu*

Swine flu (Type A Influenza) is a respiratory disease of pigs, and the transmission of swine flu viruses from pigs to humans is generally quite rare. However recent cases globally including in New Zealand, have caused alarm due to the high numbers and rate of transmission between people.

Symptoms of swine flu are similar to the seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhoea and vomiting. Severe secondary illnesses (eg. pneumonia, respiratory infections) and deaths have occurred.

The spread of swine flu is thought to be in much the same way regular seasonal flu spreads—from person to person through coughing and sneezing. Sometimes people become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it then touching their nose or mouth. But it is important to note that swine flu is not spread through food. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products are safe.

The best way to limit the spread of flu from spreading is to limit contact with other people. The number one rule in a food premises - do not go to work if you are ill.

Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and discard your tissue into the rubbish.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours. This is to keep from infecting others and spreading the virus further.

