

Food *for thought*

Summer 2019, Volume 11 Issue 1

A newsletter for Fairfax County food establishment owners and operators and their employees

New Menu for Summer? Don't Forget to Update the Consumer Advisory!

Any menu that includes meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, and eggs that will be served raw or lightly cooked must include a Consumer Advisory. A complete Consumer Advisory consists of TWO separate statements, a **disclosure** statement and a **reminder** statement.

The statement that most people are familiar with is the reminder statement. This statement reads "Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness" OR "Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness, especially if you have certain medical conditions." The reminder statement is commonly found on menus, but by itself is not considered a complete Consumer Advisory.

To meet the full requirements, menus must also include a disclosure statement. Menu items that are served raw or undercooked must be disclosed or identified to the consumer. One way to provide an approved disclosure would be an asterisk (*) by the menu items served raw or

undercooked linked to a footnote that states these items are served raw or undercooked. The footnote would read "These items are served raw or undercooked, or contain raw or undercooked ingredients," followed by the reminder statement.

When developing the Consumer Advisory, keep in mind any item that could be ordered and served undercooked. Common items that are often forgotten on menus include eggs and hamburgers. Another common mistake is to asterisk everything on the menu, whether it contains an undercooked item or not. If separate menus are available for breakfast, lunch, dinner or, for sushi each menu with undercooked food items must have its own Consumer Advisory. Please keep in mind that children's menus cannot include a Consumer Advisory for comminuted meats. If you have any questions about consumer advisories, please talk to your health inspector or call the Health Department at 703-246-2201, TTY 711.

Ice is Food, Too!

Ice, like all food ingredients, is subject to contamination if not handled correctly. It is easy to overlook that ice, like all food, can be the cause of a foodborne illness outbreak. You may think that the cold temperature of ice kills bacteria; however, the cold temperature does not necessarily kill the bacteria—it may merely preserve the germs until conditions are better for rapid bacteria growth, which can lead to contamination. Cold temperatures slow germ production, but when ice begins to melt, conditions improve for bacteria growth and germ populations can explode. If a beverage is cooled by contaminated ice or food is stored in contaminated ice, a foodborne illness may be transmitted to people when the beverage or food is consumed. Because ice has very little defense

against germs once it begins to melt, it is important to prevent contamination from the start. Handling ice with contaminated hands or utensils is the most common cause of illness linked to ice. The most effective way to prevent ice contamination is to use dedicated ice scoops and buckets and to train employees never to handle ice with their bare hands. Ice-only utensils (ice scoops) will help prevent cross-contamination from other potentially hazardous foods, such as red meat, poultry or fish. In addition, keep ice bins clean. Another important step is to clean ice machines and ice bins regularly to prevent soil and mold buildup. Proper cleaning means turning the machine off, emptying the contents and washing, rinsing and sanitizing the inside of the bin, as well as the underside of the door and the door gasket. When in use, cover ice bins and store the

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Active Managerial Control Awards

Congratulations to the food service operators who were recognized with an Active Managerial Control award over the last three-month period! During their recent inspections, there were no violations cited and it was observed that good active managerial controls were in place. Congratulations to:

- *Diego Valente Rangel: Bonefish Grill*
5920 Kingstowne Towne Center # 110, Alexandria, VA
- *Ibrahim Zayid: Kefaya's Café*
located at 7927 Jones Branch Dr., Mclean VA.
- *Cecilia Smith: Jays Vending, Lake Fairfax Watermine Park, Reston*
- *Michael P. Haene: German Gourmet, 5838 Columbia Pike, Falls Church, VA*
- *Nilde Pinto: Qdoba Mexican Grill, 5872 Crossroads Center, Falls Church, VA*

- *Zulema Alvarado: Chick-Fil-A, 6108C Arlington Blvd, Falls Church, VA*
- *Darrica Hill: Olive Garden Italian Restaurant #1262, 3548 S. Jefferson St., Falls Church, VA*
- *Johnathan Capo: Founding Farmers, 1904 Reston Metro Plaza, Reston*
- *David Stuebing: HCR ManorCare Fair Oaks, 12475 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy., Fairfax, VA*



See pictures and read details about how they are reducing the risk of foodborne illness in their food establishment on the Health Department website www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/awards-programs/active-managerial-control. If you have questions about active managerial control in your food establishment, please speak to your area inspector.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

During April and May of 2019, the Consumer Protection Program (CPP) conducted its Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey. The survey was sent by email to over 3,500 plus food service establishments. Food service owners and operators were asked to grade nine different categories of performance and were also asked for their thoughts and suggestions about how CPP can improve the service to its customers. Approximately 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that overall they were satisfied with the service they received and 88% agreed or strongly agreed that their food safety knowledge had improved as a result of the Health Department's inspection. Many of our customers commented that their inspectors were professional, informative, fair, friendly and helpful. Other comments included the timing of the inspections, especially

during the breakfast and lunch hour. The reason that our inspections at times coincide with those busy meal service times is because food safety inspections do need to be conducted when there is food preparation activity going on – cooking, cooling, sandwich making, etc. For a more detailed explanation of the Customer Satisfaction Survey results and comments, please contact the Health Department at 703-246-2201, TTY 711.

Ice is a Food, Too!
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scoop in a clean area that is protected from contamination. Remember, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) considers ice to be a food. Protect ice from contamination just as you would protect any other ready-to-eat food ingredient. If you have any questions, please contact the Health Department or your area inspector.

Health Department Stamp of Approval

The Fairfax County Health Department's new recognition program, Safety Through Actively Managing Practices (STAMP), is for restaurants that meet standards of food safety excellence. Congratulations to our latest STAMP enrollee:

- *Five Guys Burgers and Fries, 12156 Fairfax Towne Center, Fairfax, VA*

Contact your inspector if you have any questions or would like help with your application. Food service operators can learn more about the STAMP program and apply for it at:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/awards-programs/stamp.



Basic Food Handler Class

Fairfax County Health Department has launched a new Basic Food Handlers training class which is held on a quarterly basis. The fee is currently \$10 which covers the cost of the training manual. The Basic Food Handler training will introduce food service employees to the basics of safe food handling. This is not an alternative to the Certified Food Manager course, however food handlers and other restaurant staff who are involved in preparing, serving, transporting, warehousing, stocking, or handling food in any manner should consider taking this course. For questions about this course please call 703-246-2201, email foodsafety@fairfaxcounty.gov, or speak with your area inspector.

