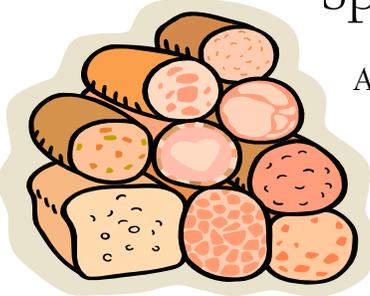


## Spotlight on Foodborne Illness: Listeriosis



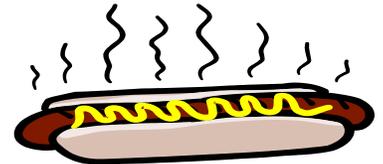
A dangerous food borne pathogen that has been in the news lately is *Listeria* bacterium. Although it affects less people than other pathogens, such as *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, and viral gastroenteritis, *Listeria* is still a serious threat to food safety. Every year in the United States, it is responsible for making an estimated 2,000 people sick and killing an additional 500. As usual, those who are most at risk are individuals who are very young, the elderly, pregnant women, and those who are immunocompromised.

### What is Listeriosis?

Listeriosis is an illness caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*, a gram-positive, rod-shaped bacteria which exists naturally in soil, water, mud, forage, and silage. Not surprisingly, *Listeria* can spread to domestic and farm animals. In turn, people consuming contaminated food products of animal origin can become infected. Symptoms include fever and muscle aches and, possibly, diarrhea and nausea. Headache, confusion, balance loss, stiffness in the neck, and convulsions can occur if listeriosis spreads to the nervous system. The average incubation period before symptoms are experienced is three (3) weeks. However, onset can occur in as little as three (3) days or take as long as 70 days.

### How is *Listeria monocytogenes* transmitted to humans?

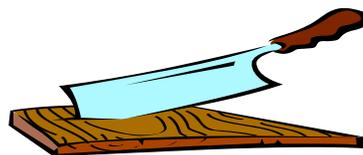
Past listeriosis infections have been traced back to foods such as raw meat, soft cheeses, ready-to-eat meats (deli meats), hotdogs, and raw meats. They have also been linked to the consumption of vegetables. Cross-contamination is also a factor when dealing with *Listeria*. It is possible for any foods to be contaminated after processing by way of unclean kitchen utensils or equipment.



### What can I do to protect others and myself from listeriosis?

Here are some guidelines to keep your patrons safe from listeriosis:

- Thoroughly cook all foods, especially raw meats
- Wash produce carefully before consuming
- Store raw meats, ready-to-eat meats, cooked foods, and produce separate from each other
- Avoid raw milk. Only consume pasteurized milk
- Wash and sanitize your kitchen equipment such as knives and cutting boards between preparing different types of foods
- Wash hands after handling raw meats



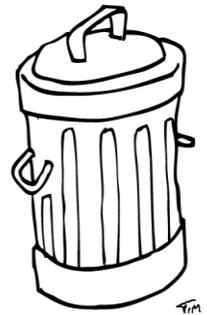


## Waiter, there's a fly in my soup!

Spring has finally arrived with its pleasant, warm temperatures. As a result, a dramatic increase in the number of flies and other insects will also be observed. Flies play an important role in the transmission of various infectious diseases to humans, such as typhoid fever, cholera, tuberculosis, salmonellosis, shigellosis, dysentery, diarrhea, and conjunctivitis.

A fly's ability to carry and transmit disease results from moving freely about decaying matter, excrement, filth, and garbage. Its footpads, mouth, hairs, and numerous crevices help carry pathogenic organisms from such wastes to food. Since flies have no teeth, all nourishment must be ingested in liquid form. Flies feed by regurgitating special vomit containing dissolving enzymes into solid food. The vomit is swimming with infectious agents that can produce disease in humans. Flies readily enter food establishments in search of food and breeding sites. What can you do to keep your establishment fly free?

- Install a SELF-CLOSING screen door on entrances. All screens must be no less than 16 mesh per inch. This also doesn't mean having the front door closed but the back entrance wide open.
- Make sure all doors to the exterior are self-closing
- Repair all holes/tears on window or door screens immediately
- Eliminate gaps around entrance/exit doors or exterior exhaust fans
- Keep the interior and exterior of your establishment free of garbage, refuse, and unsanitary conditions. Place all garbage in vermin-proof waste receptacles with the lids closed. Keep all garbage storage areas clean and ensure that garbage is regularly removed. All dumpsters must have lids!
- Hire a professional exterminator
- Fly paper can be used but care must be taken when placing them around your establishment. They should not be positioned over any food products or food preparation areas. Furthermore, flypaper must be changed regularly when it becomes full.



### NOTICE

**The Health Department routinely conducts surveys to ensure that food establishment exterior doors are kept closed. Failure to keep doors closed will result in legal action. If you plan on keeping exterior doors open for ventilation, install a tight-fitting screen door or air curtain.**



## Put a lid on it!

### Managing your garbage problem

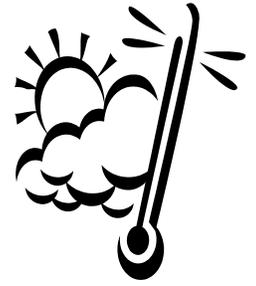
From the beginning of January through the end of April, the Englewood Health Department investigated a total of fifteen (15) complaints regarding unsanitary conditions around exterior dumpster and garbage storage areas at several retail food establishments within the city. The nature of these complaints varied; however, complaints involving the spillage of garbage containing food wastes and overflowing dumpsters were most commonly reported. The presence of unsanitary conditions around exterior dumpster and garbage storage areas constitute a public health nuisance and hazard. When improperly maintained, they serve as an attraction for disease-carrying vermin, cause odor problems, and deter patrons from visiting your establishment.

- All garbage containing food wastes must be stored in easily cleanable, non-absorbent, leak-proof, watertight, and vermin-proof waste receptacles with covers.
- All containers and dumpsters used to store garbage must be kept clean on the inside and outside.
- Garbage containers and dumpsters must be stored on an easily washable surface that is kept clean and in good repair at all times.
- All garbage and debris must be removed as often as necessary and in such a manner as to prevent public health nuisances, development of excessive odors, overflow, or the attraction of insects, animals, or rodents.
- All recyclable materials must be stored in a neat manner. All cardboard must be COMPLETELY broken-down and bundled.
- Keep all curbside and exterior areas free of litter at all times.
- All used cooking oil must be placed in easily cleanable, non-absorbent, leak-proof, watertight, and vermin-proof containers with tight-fitting lids. An approved and licensed waste removal company must remove used cooking oil. Please keep receipts and other documentation indicating service by such a company. **Dumping of used oil into storm drains or catch basins is prohibited and will result in legal action.**



## How to Chill Out this Summer

Spring is already here, and before you know it summer will be right around the corner. This means fun in the sun, and high temperatures. This is the best season for food establishments, and making sure your refrigeration systems are operating sufficiently is more optimal now than ever.



There are a number of different ways that can contribute to someone acquiring a food borne illness. A number of factors including, hand washing, safe cooking temperatures, cold and hot holding temperatures, proper methods of reheating and cooling are risk factors that if performed and practiced improperly, are the most common factors resulting in food borne illness and are stressed during routine inspections.



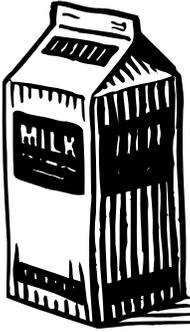
Remember that cold foods must be held at 41°F or below. Foods which are cooked in advance or potentially hazardous also must be rapidly cooled to 41°F within six (6) hours. Proper refrigeration is very important in the prevention of food borne illness. Here are some helpful hints on how to keep food cold and electric bills low:

- Keep condenser housings, coils, and condensers free of dust accumulation in order to ensure optimum operating efficiency.
- Check door gaskets for flexibility and proper fitting. Remember, that any gasket which is cracked or stiff should be replaced. Gaskets should make firm contact around the entire perimeter of the door. The purposes of gaskets are to insulate the unit so that the cold air stays in and the warm air stays out.
- Have an accurate thermometer provided for each refrigerator and freezer. Make sure these are checked daily to ensure that refrigerators are kept at 41°F or below, and freezers are kept at 0°F or below.
- Do not overstock shelves or line them with paper cardboard. This creates uneven cooling in the unit.
- Have the units serviced on a regular basis.



Remember that routine maintenance performed now can save you hundreds of dollars in costly repairs and wasted energy in the future. Summer is a great time of year, so enjoy it but remember: chill out.

## “Use By”... “Sell By”... “Best if Used By”... *What’s the Difference?*



Most people believe that the expiration date on a given food product means that if that product is used after the date stamp on the product, it is unsafe to eat or drink. In fact, there are actually three types of dates, which you may encounter on a food product, those being, “Use-by,” “Sell-by,” or “Best if Used-by.”

A “Use-by” date is the last date recommended to use the product for best quality.

A “Sell-by” date is the last date for a store to display the product for sale for best quality.

A “Best if Used-by” date is used to help the consumer know when to use the product for best quality.

These dates are all determined by the manufacturer of the product and not by any Federal, State, or Local Health Agency. It does mean that if you use the product after that date, the product may not be at its peak quality. If you remember the following rules, you can protect yourself from possible problems with the product:



- Purchase the product before the package date expires and examine discounted or damaged goods.
- If the product is perishable, take the food home immediately and if the packaging indicates, refrigerate it immediately.
- Verify with a thermometer that your refrigeration is 41°F or below.
- If you cannot use the product within a couple of days, freeze it. Frozen foods kept continuously frozen are generally safe, though with time you will lose quality.
- Follow all handling instructions on the product.

The best rule to remember when dealing with food products is,  
“When in Doubt, Throw it Out.”

# REMINDERS



Every establishment in Englewood **MUST** have a Certified Food Manager on site and at all times during establishment hours of operation. **State rule became effective JANUARY 2, 2010.**



Be mindful of cross-contamination from raw meats to ready-to-eat and cooked foods. Wash and sanitize kitchen equipment thoroughly before and after using.



If you plan on ventilating your establishment by propping open an entranceway or windows, install a tight-fitting, self-closing screen door or window screen



Keep your garbage area properly maintained. Do not deposit refuse on the ground. All garbage containers must have lids



Check your products for expiration dates! Products that have expired should not be on store shelves for the public to purchase.



As the days get hotter, make sure to check cold holding units (refrigerators, freezers, bain maries and low boy units, etc) for accurate cold holding temperatures of 41°F or below, 0°F for freezers. All units should have thermometers and keep these units closed to prevent foods from spoiling due to temperature abuse

**Sources:** New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Service – Chapter 24 of the New Jersey State Sanitary Code; [www.google.com/cartoonstock](http://www.google.com/cartoonstock) (images); Control of Communicable Diseases Manual, Seventeenth Edition

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