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FOOD SAFETY

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Food Safe Classes:

October 20 —Level 1

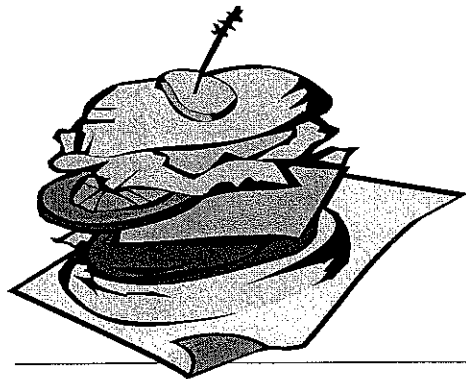
November 15 & 16—Level 2

November 17—Level 1

December 06—Level 1

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Be Careful with Ice

Did you know that ice is a food and it should be treated with the same care as any other food?



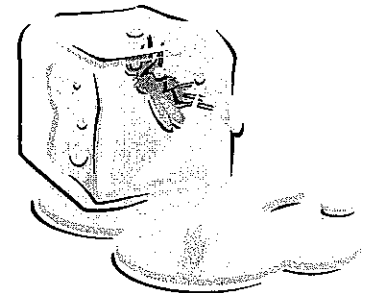
So, for example, if you don't wash your hands after using the bathroom and then use a hand to scoop out ice, the ice may be contaminated. This can even happen if you use a glass or a scoop, if your hand makes contact with the ice.

Bacteria, viruses and mold can survive in ice. And, over time, mold can build up and create a dangerous poison. Toxic black mold can build up in about a month.

How often do the ice machines get cleaned and sanitized in your establishment? You need a good routine for keeping your ice clean.

Try these tips:

- Don't store food containers in the ice.
- Use an ice scoop and store it outside the ice bin, not in the ice.
- Don't use containers for holding ice if they are also used for storing food or chemicals.
- Don't eat, drink or smoke around ice-making machines.
- Frequently clean and sanitize utensils used in ice.
- Hang ice containers upside down to keep them dry and off the floor. And don't stack one ice container inside another.
- Clean the area around the ice machine using a sponge and mild soap and water.
- Clean the ice-making machines once a week.



The Trouble with Sprouts

As a food handler, you can not control what happens to food before it arrives in your establishment. Instead, you must rely on suppliers to provide food that is grown and shipped safely. But once the food arrives in your door, you can take extra care not to contaminate it. Some foods are a lot more risky than others.

Take sprouts, for example.



Unfortunately, the growing conditions for sprouts are also ideal for any bacteria that happen to be lurking on the seeds. Sprouts may contain germs that can make consumers really ill or even kill them. Making customers ill is not good for business, so sprout growers have been trying hard to improve their food safety practices, by increasing testing for contamination, for example. Typically, the seeds are soaked in a sanitizing solution and are then germinated for approximately 4.5 days. But the sanitizing step does not remove all the bacteria. Growers get the irrigation water tested for contamination because it contains a sampling of all of the bacteria in the sprouts. The idea is that the test results arrive back from the lab before the sprouts have finished growing, so, if there is a problem, the sprouts are not released for sale.

For more information, refer to the "Code of Practice for the Hygienic Production of Sprouted Seeds" developed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

But this safety step does not always appear to work as planned. Perhaps you saw the recent reports about outbreaks of foodborne illness in Germany and France caused by a rare strain of *E. coli*—called *E. coli* O104:H4? This outbreak resulted in thousands of illnesses. At least 47 deaths were confirmed to be a result of *E. coli* O104:H4 infections and complications. We are all familiar with *E. coli* O157:H7 because it has been the cause of outbreaks linked to hamburgers, juice, lettuce and other foods. But there are other kinds of *E. coli* that can also produce the same toxin that causes illness and can cause a very serious condition known as Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), which is often deadly. The *E. coli* O104:H4 strain involved in the German and French outbreaks was particularly powerful, so a significant proportion of those who become ill also suffered HUS.

Health Canada reports that since 1973, there have been at least 40 outbreaks of foodborne illness linked to raw or lightly cooked sprouts. Most of those were caused by *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157:H7.

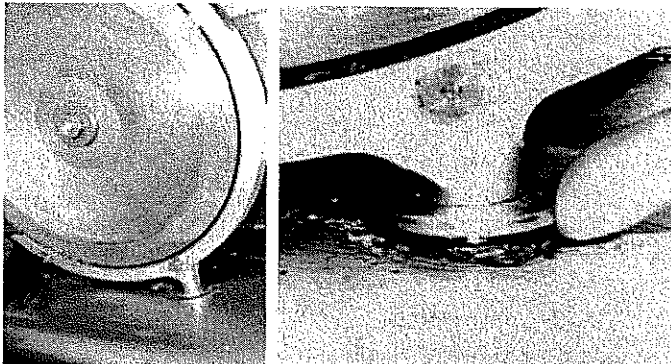


Health Canada advises individuals including children, the elderly, pregnant women, and persons with weakened immune systems, should avoid eating raw sprouts. Consumers are advised to cook sprouts thoroughly and to ask that raw sprouts not be added to their food.

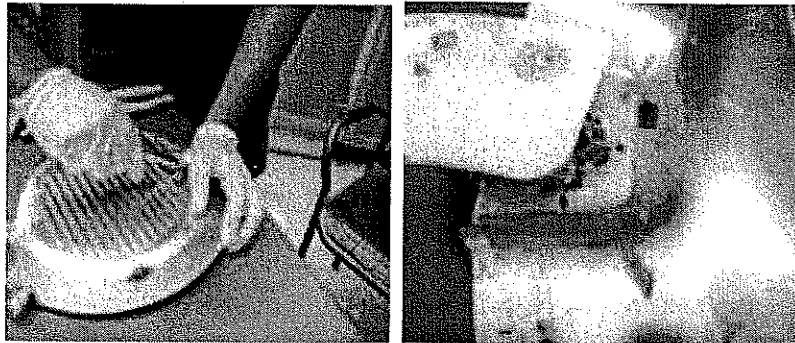
Keeping Your Deli Slicer Safe

Did you know that outbreaks of food-borne illness have been associated with deli slicers that were not cleaned and sanitized properly? Food debris builds up on and around the slicer. This build-up is a great place for pathogens to survive and multiply.

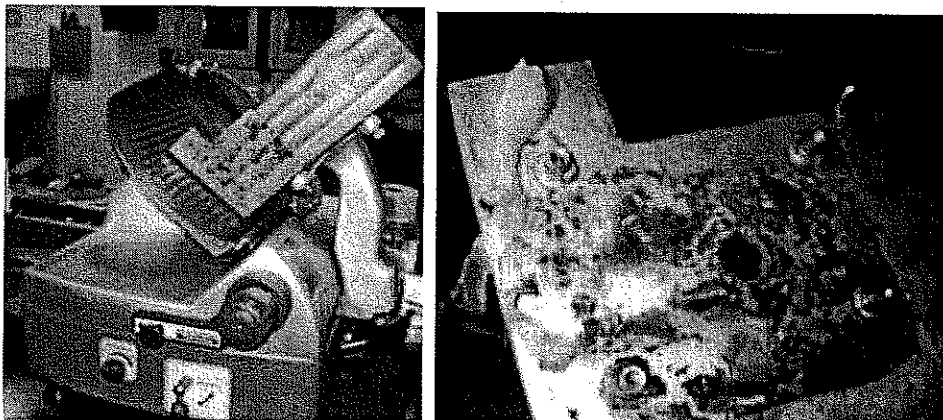
- Clean and sanitize your slicer according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Clean and sanitize throughout the day.
- Post cleaning instructions near the slicer
- Check gaskets, seams, ring guard mount, blade guard, slicer handle and under the slicer for food and liquid debris.
- Service your slicer according to the manufacturer's schedule.



Ring guard Mount



Blade guard



Slicer Handle

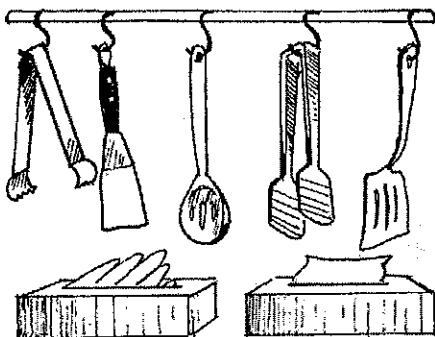
Anti-Germ Food Contact Materials: Handle with Care

Just because a cutting board a utensil or any other food contact material is treated with a built-in anti-germ product does not mean you can rely on it to be effective in every situation.

Food contact materials treated with silver or other antimicrobials, for example, have limited effects when they come into contact with organic material, according to two Norwegian researchers who tested numerous products. More and more products are being sold with claims that they slow the growth of bacteria, molds and fungi, wrote Trond Møretrø and Solveig Langsrud, in a review published in the July issue of the *Journal of Food Protection*.

So, for example, you can find cutting boards treated with new materials such as nanosilver. There are numerous other products that use anti-germ materials, but the scientific evidence that they work in real-life situations, as opposed to in lab tests, is not available for most of them, the two researchers found. One problem with silver is that it can sometimes be released very quickly, so the antimicrobial effect may wear off although the product is still being used in contact with food.

The researchers also found that the regulatory authorities tend to focus on the potential effects of the materials as poisons rather than whether they actually have an anti-germ effect in practical use.



These treated food contact materials do not allow you to take any shortcuts in your food safety and sanitation steps.

Test Yourself on Food Safety

Here's a quick test of your food safety knowledge. See if you can answer all six questions correctly.

- The single biggest cause of foodborne illness in food establishments is:
 - Cross contamination.
 - Dirty hands.
 - Inadequate cooking of foods.
 - Inadequate cooling of foods.
- Cross contamination happens when a foodborne hazard transfers from one food to another:
 - On a cutting board.
 - On a knife.
 - On a food worker's hands.
 - All of the above.
- The best way to control the growth of bacteria in a food establishment is by controlling:
 - Cross-contamination.
 - Time and temperature.
 - Temperature and water activity.
 - None of the above.
- You have to tell the manager if you come into contact with which of the following illnesses?
 - Shigatoxin-producing *E. coli*
 - Shigella*
 - Hepatitis A.
 - All of the above.
- What is the best way to thaw potentially hazardous foods?
 - In the refrigerator.
 - In the oven.
 - Under running water.
 - None of the above.
- You can prevent cross contamination by:
 - Washing your hands
 - Separating raw and cooked foods.
 - Keeping food contact surfaces clean and sanitized.
 - All of the above

(Sources for this issue: Health Canada, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Food Talk (Setanta Publishing), USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, FDA 2009 Food Code, Journal of Food Protection.)

Answers: 1 (b), 2(d), 3(b), 4 (d), 5(a), 6(d).