

# just for the health of it

A Food Safety Newsletter for Food Service Workers

## Inspector's Note

Incidents of chemical foodborne illness or the presence of physical hazards in food may not occur as often as foodborne illness caused by microbes; however, foodhandlers still need to be aware of possible chemical and physical hazards. By being aware of these hazards, food handlers can take the necessary steps to prevent possible illness or injury.

This is YOUR newsletter and your input is necessary so that we can provide you with the information that you need and want the most.

Drop us a line -- we welcome your comments, concerns or questions.

Health Inspection Services  
1-800-461-1818 or  
protect@porcupinehu.on.ca

## Food Safety Hazards

"Public health experts estimate that there are 11 to 13 million cases of foodborne illness in Canada every year".<sup>2</sup> Foodborne illness can be caused by biological hazards, chemical hazards and physical hazards. By controlling food safety hazards most cases of foodborne illness can be prevented.

### Biological Hazards

Biological hazards are living organisms that can grow and cause illness. Examples of biological contamination include: bacteria, viruses, insects, plants, birds, fish, animals, and humans. Prevention includes: avoiding cross-contamination, refrigerating food, thoroughly cooking food, rapidly cooling and reheating cooked food, pest prevention and control, and practicing good personal hygiene.

### Chemical Hazards

Chemical hazards include pesticides, food additives and preservatives, cleaning and sanitizing supplies, plastics, and toxic metals that

leach through worn cookware and equipment. Lubricants used on equipment, personal care products such as hairsprays, and paints or petroleum products can also contaminate food. Prevention includes: covering food, using food-grade containers, washing fruits and vegetables, cleaning and sanitizing equipment, storing chemicals in labelled containers away from food areas, and washing hands before, during, and after food preparation.

### Physical Hazards

Physical hazards are when foreign objects are accidentally introduced to foods, including dirt, hair, broken glass and crockery, nails, staples, and metal fragments. Prevention includes: keeping hair tied back and wearing hair nets, never wearing false nails, maintaining protective shields over food areas, cleaning can openers before and after each use, removing staples, nails, and other objects from boxes when food is received, and practicing good personal hygiene.

Adapted from:

1. TRAINCAN, Inc. ADVANCED.fst® Manager Certification Coursebook (2nd Ed.).
2. Causes of Foodborne Illness, viewed on-line 06/29/2011 (<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/concen/causee.shtml>)

## Foodsafe Tip

Always use food grade containers to store food, and be sure to store cleaning chemicals in correctly labelled containers away from food preparation areas. Cleaning agents that are not labelled and stored near food may be mistaken for a food ingredient.