

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

*A Newsletter for our Foodservice Establishments*

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COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY

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To see the last edition of Food For  
Thought, visit [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org)

## NOT ALL PLASTICS ARE CREATED EQUAL

The food sanitarians are observing several serious problems associated with the use of large 32 and 44 gallon bulk containers or the bin containers that can be purchased from the local superstores; most are not "food grade", they are improperly cleaned and sanitized, stacking bulk containers prohibits air drying due to trapped water vapor and moisture, inadequate drain board areas for handling more than one bulk container, a rim design which retains water when the bulk container is inverted, a handle design which exhibits deep debris catching crevices, there is an absence of suitably sized facilities for the washing, rinsing, and sanitizing of 32 gallon and larger sized bulk containers and the same type of container is being dually used for both food preparation and storage and for the storage of refuse.

Plastics used to package or store food must be "food grade." These plastics must be of high quality and cannot contain harmful dyes or chemicals. The food storage bags on the market you find in your local grocery store are clearly labeled "food grade", however, after that most bags or liners are not clearly labeled.

Garbage can liners and most large storage bins are clearly not food grade; most are made from recycled plastics or chemicals and not acceptable for moist or hygroscopic foods. "Food grade" materials shall be smooth, corrosion resistant, nontoxic, stable, and nonabsorbent under use conditions and shall not impart odor, color, or taste nor contribute to the adulteration of food.

Therefore, when your establishment needs food storage containers ask your supplier for NSF accepted or equivalent food grade plastic. Do not go to the local superstore and buy any container. You must buy "food grade."

All of your containers and liners must be in good repair; liners cannot be reused. The containers must be washed, rinsed and sanitized each time the bulk container is refilled with additional product or as often as is necessary to keep them clean.

If you have any questions regarding your plastics, ask your sanitarian.

*Karen Griffith, R.E.H.S.*

*Environmental Health Coordinator*

## MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION UPDATES:

The next Certified Food Safety Manager classes offered by the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency are as follows:

ServSafe-(Branch & Hillsdale Counties)  
This is a two day class with the exam given at the end of the second day. Time 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

March 20 and 27, 2012

May 22 and 29, 2012

August 14 and 21, 2012

National Registry of Food Professionals-(St. Joseph County) This is a one day class with the exam at the end of the day. Time is 8:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

March 21, 2012

June 6, 2012

October 17, 2012

The registration fee for either class is \$140.00. Retaking the test or renewal of the certification is \$65.00

## FOOD PROGRAM ADVISORY GROUP

Have you ever wanted to provide input on the local health department's food program? If you answered yes, then I would ask that you consider volunteering to be a member of the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency's Food Program Advisory Group. The Advisory Group will meet at least once each year to discuss food safety issues, food safety strategies and interventions to control risk factors. Meetings will be held in our centrally located Coldwater, MI office at 570 Marshall Road. Those who volunteer are not obligated to maintain their membership in the group but we do hope that volunteer owner/operators will be able to commit to either a 2 or 4 year term of participation. Ready to sign-up? Please contact Karen Griffith, Environmental Health Coordinator at 517-279-9561 ext. 109 by April 30th. Want more information? Contact either Karen or me at 269-273-2161 ext. 228.

*Rebecca A. Burns, R.S.,*

*Director of Environmental Health*

## KEEP EVERYONE HEALTHY

Managers or people in charge of a food service establishment must be aware of their employee health and activities that are transmissible through food. These employee health and activities can have devastating effects on the other employees and customers.

All employees of a food service establishment shall report any health concerns or activities before reporting to work to allow the manager or person in charge to reduce the risk of food borne disease transmission, including providing necessary information such as date and time of onset of symptoms, type of illness or exposure to an illness without symptoms. If any food service employees

have the following symptoms, exclude them from the food service establishment; vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, sore throat with fever, infected wound or a pustular boil.

If a food service employee has been diagnosed or exposed to the following illnesses, called THE BIG FIVE, which are Salmonella typhi, Shigella, Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli, Hepatitis A and Noro-virus, they are contagious and the food service employees must be excluded from work in the food service establishment. They cannot return to work at the food service establishment until approval has been received from the local health department.

The establishment must

have a written Employee Health/Food borne policy in place and be enforced. The food service employees must have a good understanding of this policy and how it effects the food service establishment and customers.

Managers/operators must know the policy and when they need to restrict the employee from working with or around food or exclude an employee from coming into the establishment.

If your establishment does not have an Employee Health/Food borne policy in place, please contact the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency.

*Carrie Southern, R.S.*  
*Environmental Health*

## Is Your Thermometer Accurate?



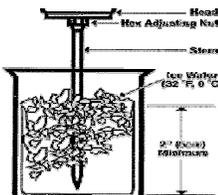
Do you know for sure if the thermometers you are using to check temperatures of potentially hazardous foods are accurate?

Are you sure that the salmonella that is potentially in your raw poultry is completely destroyed by proper cooking temperatures? Having an accurate thermometer is crucial in determining whether potentially hazardous foods, like poultry, is safe to consume. There are many types of food probe thermometers out on the market that work very well and are reliable. But how do you know if that thermometer is functioning properly every day that it is being used? Can you say calibration?

Thermometers must always be calibrated to check and ensure that they are accurate and functioning properly. By calibrating, we are testing the thermometer for accuracy. There are two methods of calibrating thermometers that every cook and chef should know. The first and most common method is called the "Ice Water Method."

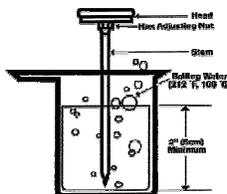
Simply fill a drinking glass full of crushed ice and then add cold water. After a couple of minutes the internal temperature of the ice water will reach a constant 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

Submerge the probe of your thermometer into the ice water bath and check the temperature read out. It should register 32 degrees (+ or - 1 within 32) if it is working properly and accurately. Typically there is an adjustment for calibration on most thermometers that you have and the instructions for calibration are usually on the packaging the thermometer came in when purchased. On most metal stem or probe thermometers, a hex nut on the back of the dial is your adjustment tool. Simply hold the thermometer in the ice water and turn the nut until the dial reaches 32



degrees. Once this is completed you are officially calibrated.

The second method that can be used for checking the calibration of a thermometer is submerging the probe into boiling water. This is obviously called the "Boiling Water Method." Water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit and your thermometer should register at this temperature if it is accurate. The "Boiling Water Method" poses more of a risk for safety due to possibly being burned from the steam. Some thermometer calibration instructions require that you check or calibrate by using both methods. Be sure to check the instructions on calibration for your specific style of thermometer.



How often should thermometers be calibrated? We recommend at least once a week. However, we are aware of some chain operations that require daily checks. It is always best to be safe and sure. Thermometers can lose their calibration accuracy by being bumped or dropped during use and therefore they should be checked on a routine basis. If you know your thermometer is accurate and calibrated then you can use that thermometer to check all of your refrigeration thermometers. Sometimes the refrigeration thermometers may become damaged or lose their accuracy. The only way to know for sure if your refrigeration and/or cooking temperatures are accurate is by using a properly calibrated thermometer. Be safe and use calibrated thermometers at all times when checking delivery temperatures, cold holding, hot holding and final cook off temperatures.

*Rob Stauffer, R.E.H.S.  
Environmental Health Sanitarian*

## Cooling Potentially Hazardous Foods Properly

### Key Elements:

- Hot foods must be cooled from 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours, and from 70°F to 41°F within an additional 4 hours.
- Reduce the volume/mass of food.
- Stirring hot foods increases the cooling rate.
- DO NOT cool foods at room temperature.
- Check the temperature periodically and stir to be sure it reaches 41°F in 6 hours.

### Methods:

#### Shallow Metal Pans

- Leave pan partially uncovered.
- Refrigerate immediately.
- DO NOT stack hot pans. Allow for air flow.
- Stir frequently during cooling.

#### Ice Bath (Must use ice and water)

- Divide product into 1 gallon containers.
- Immerse product pan to depth of product in sink or larger pan.
- Stir often/agitate.
- Refrigerate immediately.

#### Small Portions (Reduce the mass)

- Divide food into smaller pan.
- Cut or slice portion of meat.

#### Use Freezer Stick

- Pour hot liquid into a large pot, then stir the liquid with a freezer stick every 15 minutes.
- Additional freezer sticks may be needed to reach 70°F within 2 hours. Leave a freezer stick in the pot and place into walk-in cooler.

*Dave Wagoner  
Environmental Health Sanitarian*

## Safe Food Fundraising Events

2012 finds Branch, Hillsdale and St. Joseph county service groups, schools

and community organizers looking for creative ways to bring in funding for different activities held throughout our three counties. Increasing numbers of groups are assembling large amounts of food in churches, schools and even homes. Typically these groups are making cakes, pies, cookies, subs and pizzas with the help of volunteers. This food is then sold or auctioned off at fundraising events across the counties. At times we find that these types of fundraisers can unintentionally lead to some potentially dangerous food safety situations. Here are some helpful tips to ensure a safe food fundraising event.

The first thing we would like everyone to understand is that any food item(s) sold to the public shall be prepared in a licensed kitchen along with the supervision of a certified kitchen manager. The next question many people will ask is, what locations are licensed? Most of the schools and many of the churches are licensed for food preparation in all three counties. Many of these establishments that are licensed have one if not more certified food handlers on site. Certified food handlers have taken and passed a food safety course, and can be a great resource for safely preparing food for the public.

Another issue that we find is the lack of package labeling on the items being sold to the public. These labels should have basic information listed on them for example, ingredients list, organization's name and phone number, name of the product being sold and date the product was made. These labels don't need to be super elaborate, just contain the required information in case the local health department would need to track where the product came from during a food borne illness investigation.

Sometimes the little things can be overlooked when planning a large event. When volunteers are preparing food, they should be dressed in proper clothing, full toed shoes, clean shirts and pants, staff should not wear jewelry like rings, bracelets, or even

finger nail polish. Hair should be restrained with either a hair net or baseball cap. Food preparation surfaces shall be kept clean and sanitized. Hand washing facilities shall be available.

These fundraising events can be lots of fun for the volunteers and organizers to participate in. They are also a great way for the community to come together, and young people to take ownership in groups they belong to. Here at your community health agency we look forward to working with you to make these events fun and safe for everyone involved.

*Joseph Frazier  
Environmental Health Sanitarian*

### **Food Service Establishments receiving Certificate of Excellence for 2011**

**Branch County:**  
**American Legion Memorial Post - Bronson**  
**Anderson Elementary - Bronson**  
**Chicago Street School - Bronson**  
**Ryan Elementary School - Bronson**  
**Allen's Root Beer Drive In - Coldwater**  
**Branch County Commission on Aging / H&C**  
**Burnside Sr. - Coldwater**  
**Capri Drive In - Coldwater**  
**Commercial Sports Bar - Coldwater**  
**Community Health Center of Branch County - Coldwater**  
**Coldwater Lamplighter Lounge - Coldwater**  
**Dearth Community Center - Coldwater**  
**Dutch Uncle Donuts - Coldwater**  
**Great Lakes Health & Fitness - Coldwater**  
**Holiday Inn Express - Coldwater**  
**Jefferson Elementary School - Coldwater**  
**Jennings Elementary School - Coldwater**  
**Lakeland Elementary School - Coldwater**  
**Lincoln Elementary School - Coldwater**  
**Mancinos Pizza of Coldwater - Coldwater**  
**Max Larson Elementary School - Coldwater**  
**Pansophia Academy - Coldwater**  
**Roger the Chef - Coldwater**  
**Skate Ranch - Coldwater**  
**St. Charles School - Coldwater**  
**Subway #36290 - Coldwater**  
**Taco Bell #4029 - Coldwater**  
**Willows Bar and Grill - Coldwater**  
**Oriole Snack Shack - Quincy**  
**Quincy Dairy Queen - Quincy**  
**Quincy Golf Course - Quincy**  
**The Country Road Steak Barn - Quincy**  
**Stables - Quincy**  
**The Bucket - Union City**  
**Union City Elementary School - Union City**

**Union City High School - Union City**  
**Union City Middle School - Union City**

**Hillsdale County:**  
**Camden-Frontier School - Camden**  
**The Clubhouse - Camden**  
**Burger King # 13790 - Hillsdale**  
**Coffee Cup Diner - Hillsdale**  
**Community Action Agency (Head Start)**  
**Greenfield School - Hillsdale**  
**Hillsdale Filling Station - Hillsdale**  
**Hillsdale High School - Hillsdale**  
**Hungry Howies - Hillsdale**  
**King Me Coffee - Hillsdale**  
**Premiere Theatre - Hillsdale**  
**S & S Concession - Hillsdale**  
**SJ Gier Elementary - Hillsdale**  
**Subway - Hillsdale**  
**The Finish Line - Hillsdale**  
**Jonesville High School - Jonesville**  
**Subway Sandwiches #21409 - Jonesville**  
**The Cedars, Inc. - Jonesville**  
**The Manor Foundation (Boys) - Jonesville**  
**Williams Elementary School - Jonesville**  
**Kasy's of Litchfield - Litchfield**  
**Ann Dee's Tavern - North Adams**  
**Johnson's Pizza & Subs - North Adams**  
**Luigi's Pizza - North Adams**  
**North Adams Public School - North Adams**  
**Pittsford Area School - Pittsford**  
**Ray's Tavern - Reading**  
**Reynolds Elementary School - Reading**  
**Waldron Area School - Waldron**

**St. Joseph County:**  
**Burr Oak School - Burr Oak**  
**Constantine High School - Constantine**  
**Constantine Middle School - Constantine**  
**Eastside Elementary - Constantine**  
**Piper's Grinders Galore - Constantine**  
**Rachel's - Constantine**  
**Riverside Elementary - Constantine**  
**St. Joseph County COA Site - Constantine**  
**Town Fryer - Constantine**  
**Mendon Jr. & Sr. High School - Mendon**  
**The Blue Bird Café Restaurant - Mendon**  
**Nottawa Community Schools - Nottawa**  
**Burger King - Sturgis**  
**Congress Elementary School - Sturgis**  
**Corner Café - Sturgis**  
**Little Caesars - Sturgis**  
**Pipers Grinders Galore - Sturgis**  
**St. Joseph County COA Site - Sturgis**  
**Sturgis High School - Sturgis**  
**Sturgis Middle School - Sturgis**  
**Subway at Wal-Mart - Sturgis**  
**Taco Bell - Sturgis**  
**Trinity Lutheran Church School - Sturgis**  
**Wall Elementary School - Sturgis**  
**Wenzel Elementary School - Sturgis**  
**Hoppin Elementary School - Three Rivers**  
**Norton Elementary School - Three Rivers**  
**Park Community School - Three Rivers**  
**St. Joseph County COA Site - Three Rivers**  
**Three Rivers 6 Cinema - Three Rivers**  
**Three Rivers High School - Three Rivers**  
**Three Rivers Middle School - Three Rivers**  
**Carl's Catering Commissary - White Pigeon**  
**White Pigeon High School - White Pigeon**