



# foodfacts

Madison Department of Public Health Environmental Health Services Section

Madison, Wisconsin

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## Planning A New Location? Don't Forget Us!

**M**any of you reading this newsletter today will be involved with opening other food establishments at new locations. The process of opening a new establishment (or buying an existing business) can be stressful, as anyone who has been through the experience realizes. There are mountains of paperwork and thousands of details that need immediate attention.

**O**ne of the details that may be delayed too long is the contact that must take place with our department. Sometimes operators are simply unaware that the Health Department must approve plans and inspect the facility prior to opening. In other instances, the operator has already been involved in opening several other establishments, so he or she feels they know the ropes and Health Department contact is delayed. In still other cases, the owner or manager leaves the details to the architect, who doesn't follow up with us in a timely

manner (and who isn't very familiar with Wisconsin Codes).

### Plan Review required

In almost every case in Madison, where remodeling or new construction occurs in a food or drinking establishment, plans will be required. Many of you are aware that construction plans must be submitted to Building Inspection for review and approval. A set of plans must also be submitted to the Health Department for a totally separate review and approval--before construction begins.

It is not easy for either the establishment owner or the health inspector to try and correct mistakes after the work has been done. Plumbing mistakes are a good example. It can cost several thousand extra dollars to install a handwash sink in a required location after all the plumbing has been completed. On the other hand, if the plans are reviewed prior to the completion of the plumbing work, the cost of moving a sink location is minimal. After the plans are reviewed and approved, work must proceed according to the plans. Any changes must be further approved by the Health Department.

(See *Opening*, page 2)



## Randy Holveck Joins Our Team

Meet the newest addition to our staff: Randy Holveck. Randy, who replaces Rick VanDerGeest, will be responsible for all inspections on the far east and southeast side of Madison from the East Towne area to the Yahara Golf Course area. Randy comes to Madison from Council Bluffs, Iowa, where he was a public health sanitarian for over 12 years. He has two boys, Rob (age 12) and Jim (age 9). His wife, Jane, is a special education teacher in the DeForest elementary and high schools. Randy has many outside interests -- volleyball, gymnastics, photography, and singing in choral groups. He will be using his photography skills as he works on some educational programs for our department; and he will be involved in future Food Operator Training programs. ♦

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## Opening

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### Food and Drink license required

In addition to the plan review, the City of Madison Food and Drink license should be applied for as early as possible, so there will be no delay when you are ready to have your opening inspection.

Do not confuse the Food and Drink license with your liquor license; the two are separate. The City of Madison Alcohol License Review Committee approves the liquor license; the Madison Department of Public Health approves the Food and Drink license. All establishments selling food or drink to the public must be in possession of a current Food and Drink license.

### Changing locations

Please be aware that your Food and Drink license is not transferable from one location to another. A new license application is required for each change of location.

### Change of licensee

Confusion often arises when an individual owner decides to incorporate. This is defined by the State to be a legal change of owner, which requires a new license application.

In most cases, any change in the licensee name must result in a new Food and Drink license application. This includes changes in corporation names.

### Inspection prior to opening

One of the reasons your health inspector wants to know as early as possible when construction is to begin is so he or she can walk through the establishment and deal with problems that didn't appear on the plans. Once again, if a wall or ceiling has to be re-done, it is much more cost effective to have the work done when the contractors are already there working, rather than having to bring them back after the work is completed.

The final inspection before the opening will be done at a mutually agreeable time when your construction is completed, the plumbing is completed and your restaurant equipment has been installed and is properly functioning (coolers, dishwasher, etc.). If there are still many violations present at this time, your license will not be released, and you will not be allowed to operate until corrections are made.

We at the Health Department will be the first to agree that all the various

rules can be confusing to people who are most interested in getting a profitable business underway. What can you do to make it as easy as possible on yourself?

- Call the Health Department to discuss future plans or changes with your area inspector.
- Submit new construction or remodeling plans to the Health Department for approval before work begins.
- Apply for your Food and Drink license well in advance of your opening date.
- Call your area health inspector to arrange your opening inspection at a time that will be convenient for both of you. ♦

## SMOKING: New Ordinance in Madison?

Unless you have been out of the country, you are aware that on October 13, the Madison City Council passed an amendment to the existing smoking ordinance (MGO 23.05) which would have affected all restaurants and taverns in Madison where smoking is currently allowed.

As **foodfacts** goes to print, however, we find that things have changed! On October 27, the Council decided to revisit its decision; it referred the item to December for another look.

We will cover their decision in the Spring issue of **foodfacts**. ♦



# Fishy Facts:

## Test Your Knowledge of Seafood Safety

A recent survey by the Food and Drug Administration reports that 93 percent of Americans eat fish. The consumption of seafood is up by 20 percent over the past decade and, as people try to reduce the amount of fat they consume, it is likely this trend will continue. Test your knowledge of the facts about seafood products by taking this quick quiz:



1. U.S. consumers eat more of this seafood than any other:

- (a) Shrimp
- (b) Canned tuna
- (c) Fresh or frozen fillets
- (d) Salmon

2. Which food contains the least amount of fat?

- (a) 4 ounces of lean ground beef
- (b) 4 ounces of halibut

- (c) 3 pieces of fried, drained lean bacon
- (d) 2 ounces of cheddar cheese

3. Which food contains the least amount of cholesterol:

- (a) one egg yolk
- (b) 3 ounces tuna canned in oil and drained
- (c) double burger with cheese
- (d) 8 ounces whole milk

4. Seafood products held at 60°F will deteriorate how many times faster than seafood held on ice at 32°F:

- (a) 2 times
- (b) 4 times
- (c) 10 times
- (d) 50 times

5. Parasites in raw seafood are aesthetically unpleasing but are of little health concern:

- (a) True
- (b) False

### Answers

1. (b) Canned tuna, is consumed more than any other seafood, followed by shrimp and cod. These three account for almost half of the total fish eaten in this country.

2. (b) 4 ounces of halibut is lower in fat than any of the other foods listed. The halibut contains 3 grams of fat, the ground beef contains 16 grams, the bacon contains 9 grams and the cheese contains 10 grams.

3. (b) 3 ounces of tuna is lower in cholesterol than any of the other choices. Tuna canned in oil and drained contains 26 milligrams (mg) of cholesterol; one egg yolk contains 213 mg; double burger with cheese contains 94 mg; and 8 oz. of whole milk contains 33 mg.

4. (c) Seafood held at 60° will deteriorate 10 times faster than that held at freezing temperatures. (More on this later!)

5. (b) False. Uncleaned, raw or under cooked fish may contain parasites which are unsafe to eat. But FDA research has shown that adequate cooking and proper freezing and thawing will eliminate a potential health threat from parasites.

If you answered all the questions correctly, congratulations! You are more knowledgeable than the average consumer when it comes to seafood. The most critical information concerns the temperature issues raised in question 4, which hint at the dramatic relationship between the deterioration of seafood quality and the temperature at which it is held.

This relationship is best demonstrated by the chart on page 4, "Approximate Shelf Life of Cod Fillets". In the chart, "°F" is the temperature at which the fish is held, "Edible Shelf Life" is the amount of time the fish will remain "edible" or palatable to the average consumer, and "High Quality Shelf Life" is the amount of

time the fish will be at the peak quality which is normally associated with fresh fish.

What does this mean for the typical Madison fish consumer? Well, since the nearest ocean is a few thousand miles away, it means poor quality fish, unless that fish is properly put on ice or in refrigeration immediately after it comes out of the water.

Obviously, the most certain way of buying high quality fish when your location is far from the source is to purchase frozen fish. But how can you know how the fish was handled prior to freezing? After the fish thaws, look for bruised areas and discoloration in the tissues of the fish. This indicates the action of enzymes and possibly the growth of bacteria in the tissues of the fish, which were caused by holding the fish at improper temperatures prior to freezing. Obviously, if the fish has an off odor, it is past its edible shelf life. Another test for freshness involves tissue

(See *Fishy*, page 4)

## Fishy

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resiliency—that is, for fish with normally firm flesh, such as cod or haddock, you may poke your finger into the flesh to test the freshness. If an indentation remains or the flesh feels mushy, the fish was not high quality when packaged.

The quality of fresh fish can be judged in the same way as for frozen fish. Also, you may check for excessive drip loss from the fish, which is an indicator of cell deterioration, and slime on the fish skin that is thick and hard to wash off your hands. Although all fish skin will be slimy, cut surfaces should not contain slime.

In addition to bad smelling, poor quality fish, what are some of the problems that develop with improper temperature control of fish? Here are two serious problems that can occur.

### Scombroid histamine poisoning

Scombroid histamine poisoning is an allergic-like illness that is characterized by reddening of the face and extremities, headaches, diarrhea, rapid heartbeat and difficulty in breathing.

### Seafood Hotline

Dial 1-800-FDA-4010 to reach the FDA's new toll-free Seafood Hotline for consumers. The hotline will answer questions on seafood buying, handling and storage for home consumption and on labeling of seafood items.

Seafood specialists will answer questions directly between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. However, the line will be open 24 hours a day through a computerized information retrieval system. ♦

### Approximate Shelf Life of Cod Fillets\*

°F	Edible Shelf Life	High Quality Shelf Life
90	1 day	14 hours
60	2.5 days	1.5 days
42	6 days	3.6 days
32	2 weeks	8.4 days
29	3-4 weeks	13-17 days
10	2 months	36 days
0	1 year	7 months
-10	2 years	14 months
-20	>2 years	14 months
-40	indefinitely	indefinitely

\* From the time the fish is pulled from the ocean. Information from a talk given by Professor David Staiber, Dept. of Agriculture and Life Sciences, UW-Madison, at the 13th Annual Joint Education Conference.

Symptoms usually occur immediately or up to 30 minutes after consumption. Many people recover within four hours, but people with more severe symptoms, especially those experiencing rapid heartbeat, dizziness, blurred vision or breathing difficulties, should consult a physician immediately.

The illness is caused by histamines that develop when the fish (normally mahi mahi, tuna or mackerel) is not properly refrigerated. It is most common in warm weather, when fish are more likely to have been improperly refrigerated during harvesting, distribution shipping or storage by consumers. There was a report of Scombroid histamine poisoning from a restaurant in Dane County earlier this year.

### Botulism

Botulism is a severe illness that may be fatal. Symptoms include blurred vision, dry mouth and sore throat, paralysis, vomiting and diarrhea which develop within 2-8 hours after eating.

The illness is caused from ingesting a toxin that is produced by bacteria when food is not properly refrigerated.

The toxin-producing bacteria need anaerobic conditions to grow, so often these illness come from home canned products. Botulism is also often attributed to smoked fish sealed in air-tight packaging and held at room temperature.

There are other illnesses you may get from not handling fish properly, as with any other potentially hazardous food that will support bacterial growth. We hope this information will encourage you to take a closer look at the fish you are purchasing, whether fresh, frozen or smoked, and to be a more educated consumer. If the fish does not appear to be a quality product, chances are it isn't.

Finally, it is as important to handle the fish safely once it gets to your establishment as it is before it gets to you. Frozen fish must be thawed quickly under cold running water or in a refrigerator, not at room temperature over night. Fresh and smoked fish must be kept below 40°F at all times. Good temperature control will not only insure your customers get a safe product; they will be much more likely to get a high quality product and will want to return for more! ♦

## Videos for Loan!

**The Danger Zone** (Int. Dairy-Deli Assoc. - 30 min). This is a deli food safety and sanitation program to be used by retail employees who prepare and sell food in the deli department. Training manual included.

**Food Safety Is No Mystery** (USDA - 34 min, 10 sec). Aimed at people with little or no experience in the food industry. Training manual included.

**Food Service Disposables: Should I Feel Guilty?** (Food Service and Packaging Institute, 11 min 30 sec). A video which discussed the use of food service disposables and the impact on the environment.

**Food Service Egg Handling and Safety** (American Egg Board, 11 minutes). A very good video describing how eggs need to be handled to prevent food-borne illness.

**IPM: Control of German Cockroaches in Commercial Kitchens** (National Pest Control Association - 15 min). Good tape to provide the food operator with basic knowledge on roach control and what can be done so the least amount of pesticide is needed. Training manual.

**Safe Food - You Make the Difference** (Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, 20 minutes). A good video that discussed prevention of food-borne illness by proper food preparation and storage, hand washing and utensil washing. Proper hand washing is demonstrated.

**Sanitizing for Safety** (Clorox - 17 min). Very good, concise video which addresses common food-borne illnesses, proper personal hygiene, cross-contamination, proper cooking and holding temperatures, proper food storage and proper sanitization. (Strong emphasis on using bleach as sanitizer). Training guide included.

**Wide World of Food Service Brushes** (Sparta Brush Co. - 18 min). Reduce or eliminate the potential of creating

food-borne illness, which is caused by bacteria, viruses and parasites. (Emphasis on cleaning with brushes.)

Please contact your district public health sanitarian for information on how to borrow these videos for training (Call 266-4821).. ♦

## Vital Statistics

July 1, 1991 - June 30, 1992

Establishments licensed as restaurants	861
Establishments licensed as retail food stores	287
Food and drink establishments going out of business (or changing owners)	145
New food and drink establishments opened (pre-inspections)	164
Consumer complaints on food establishments	184

## Money Matters

Can you guess what complaint we hear most frequently from the public about food handlers? Is it about the employee who coughs and sneezes all over the food? Or is it the employee who leaves the rest room without washing their hands?

Although it is true we do get these complaints, they are not the most common. However, if you have an employee who collects money and then proceeds to make a sandwich without first washing his or her hands, this is likely to draw the attention of the customer and often results in complaints to the Health Department.

You may be interested to know that, as far back as 1971, there were studies performed by the FDA on both paper currency and coins to determine whether or not bacteria were easily transmitted by money. Paper currency contains fungicidal agents; and the ink contains ingredients which inhibit growth of bacteria. The result of the FDA studies was an interpretation that said, "It would appear that neither paper currency nor metal coins are likely fomites." In common language, they are not considered to be a factor in transmission of foodborne diseases.

All this technical information, however, does not change the perception of the customer that handling money and then handling food is bad practice. We present this to you to share our experiences and to once again encourage you to remind your employees to wash their hands often. Although it may not matter for money, it certainly matters for disease control in general. And you will be making a much better impression on your customers. ♦

# "Tell me more about the Food Safety Seminar..."

## City of Madison Food Safety Seminar

Wednesday, February 17, 1993  
From 2:00 to 4:00 PM  
Quality Inn South  
4916 East Broadway  
(It's FREE!)

To register,  
call Delores VanVeen  
Monday-Friday  
between 8:00 and 9:00 AM  
at 266-4821.



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