Minnesota Department of Health Fact Sheet December 2010

Potentially Hazardous Foods

Inadequate food temperature controls are the most common factor contributing to outbreaks of foodborne disease. Disease causing bacteria grow particularly well in foods high in protein such as meats, poultry, seafood, eggs, dairy products, cooked vegetables such as beans, and cooked cereal grains such as rice. Because of the high potential for rapid bacterial growth in these foods they are known as "potentially hazardous foods".

Temperature Danger Zone

The temperature range at which bacteria grow best in potentially hazardous foods is between 41ºF and 140ºF. The goal of all temperature controls is to either keep foods entirely out of this "danger zone" or to pass foods through this "danger zone" as quickly as possible.

Temperature Controls

Using temperature controls minimize the potential for harmful bacterial growth in foods. Controls are used when foods are received, in cold holding, during thawing, in cooking, hot holding, and during cooling and reheating.

Potentially Hazardous Foods Include:

- Food from an animal origin that is raw or heat-treated. Some examples are eggs, milk, meat, and poultry;
- Food from a plant origin that is heat-treated. Some examples are cooked rice, cooked potatoes, and cooked noodles;
- Raw seed sprouts;
- Cut melons, including watermelon, cantaloupe, and honeydew; and
- Garlic and oil mixtures.

For Further Information Contact the Following MDH District Offices:

Bemidji	♦	(218) 308-2100
Duluth	♦	(218) 723-4642
Fergus Falls	♦	(218) 332-5150
Mankato	♦	(507) 344-2700
Marshall	♦	(507) 537-7151
Metro	♦	(651) 201-4500
Rochester	♦	(507) 206-2700
St. Cloud	♦	(320) 223-7300

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