

# Food Safety Information

## A Guide to Safe Salads for Sandwiches and Meals in Catering Premises

### Introduction

The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006 require adequate safety procedures for any activities in a food business which are critical to ensuring food safety.

Surveys of sandwiches containing salads have shown high levels of bacteria in some samples. Some have been found to contain food poisoning bacteria.

The following advice is to help you control food hazards relating to salad preparation in catering premises producing salads for meals or for sandwiches.

### Hazards

Some salads, for instance lettuces, can be heavily contaminated with bacteria when purchased, even if they look clean. Salads can also be contaminated with dirt, chemicals and insects.

Contamination of salads can also occur while being stored in food premises, particularly after preparation. Bacterial contamination can arise from direct or indirect contact with raw meat and poultry. Physical and chemical contamination can arise, for instance, from poor maintenance or poor pest control.

### How to Control the Hazards

#### **Purchase**

- ✓ Salad vegetables should preferably be purchased daily and should be used while fresh.
- ✓ They should be stored in a refrigerator or in a cool, airy place where they are not exposed to contamination.

#### **Preparation**

- ✓ The area used for salad preparation and washing should only be used for the preparation of raw foods. Cutting boards should be sanitised before use.
- ✓ Salads should be thoroughly prewashed under running cold water and checked to ensure that any dirt and insects have been removed.
- ✓ Salads should be disinfected in order to reduce food poisoning bacteria to a safe level.

All chemicals used for disinfecting should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The following are recommended by their manufacturers as suitable for disinfecting salads:-

- Milton, available from most supermarkets and chemists.
- Boots double strength sterilising solution, available from most Boots the Chemist stores.
- Suma Sanitiser Tablets D4 Tabs produced by Diversey Lever, tel 01604 483500.



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- ✓ Disinfection should take place by immersing the salad below the surface of the liquid and then thoroughly rinsing in cold water, draining before use.
- ✓ The solution must be changed for every treatment or as necessary to maintain the required chlorine concentration. The method of dilution and minimum immersion times will vary depending on the disinfectant used.

### **Storage**

- ✓ Prepared salads should be stored in clean containers and covered.
- ✓ They should be placed in a refrigerator at a temperature of 8°C or below.
- ✓ They should be labelled with date and time of preparation or showing the date that they should be used by, unless they are for immediate use.

### **Sandwich Preparation**

- ✓ Salads should be stored in a refrigerator and put back in a refrigerator after each use.

### **Checking Your Hazard Controls**

- ✓ Check regularly to ensure that staff are carrying out your instructions and, in particular, that concentration of disinfectants and immersion times are being adhered to.

### **Train Your Staff**

- ✓ How to use chemicals safely to ensure the high standards outlined in this leaflet.

For further advice please contact:-

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The information in this guidance note is based on a leaflet produced for food businesses by the Norfolk Food Liaison Group and Breckland Council.