



Fresh Juices



National Concern

Making fresh-pressed apple cider and fresh juices has been a long standing tradition. Because apple cider and fresh juices are acidic and acidic foods tend to inhibit the growth and survival of microorganisms, they have traditionally been considered to be safe. The results of recent scientific studies and Departmental Laboratory analyses indicate that disease-causing microbes, such as *E. Coli 0157-H7*, *Salmonella* and *Cryptosporidium*, can survive in fresh pressed apple cider and fresh juices. The safety of fresh juices has become a National issue.

All consumers have a right to safe food. Some consumers however do have a higher susceptibility to foodborne illnesses and are considered to be high risk groups. High risk groups include young children, the elderly and people with compromised immune systems due to other health concerns.

Pasteurized vs. Unpasteurized

Pasteurization is the destruction of undesirable microorganisms through a heat process. Pasteurization of fresh juices and cider by small producers is uncommon. The Food and Drug Administration requires a warning label on unpasteurized juice products (including apple cider).

WARNING:
This product has not been pasteurized and therefore may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened systems.

The latest research indicates that pasteurization of fresh juices does not negatively affect the taste of the juice. (For unpasteurized fresh juices, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the additive, sodium benzoate, be used.) Whether the products are pasteurized or unpasteurized, the critical steps in the processing of fresh juice must be monitored to ensure a wholesome product. It is recommended that all consumers consider the following guidelines when purchasing fresh juices.

The Facility

The facility should be clean and free of insects and rodents. Well maintained facilities provide an environment which minimizes the potential for contamination of the food product. The facility should have well maintained screening and self-closing doors. Fresh-pressed cider and fresh juices must be held under refrigerated conditions. Fresh ciders and fresh juices should be kept cold at 41°F or lower. Colder temperatures preserve product shelf-life considerably. Make sure restrooms have hot and cold running water along with soap and disposable towels for hand-washing, and a covered waste container. Some facilities offer family entertainment on the grounds such as petting zoos or playgrounds. The actual processing operation must be located in a separate room or building and animals are prohibited from the processing, storage and retail areas of the building to prevent potential contamination of food products. Some processing facilities have viewing rooms where you can

observe the conditions of the processing room and employee practices.

Ask Questions

If you have any questions or concerns about the process, the product, or the facility, you should feel free to ask the operator or contact the McHenry County Department of Health.

The Finished Product

Fresh cider and fresh juices must be sold in new containers (bottles, plastic jugs, etc.) with new caps. The containers should be refrigerated and properly labeled with the following information:

- Product name
- Name and address of producer
- Net weight or volume
- Date of production
- List of ingredients/preservative percent
- Lot or batch number
- Pasteurized or Unpasteurized
- Warning statement if unpasteurized
- Keep refrigerated statement

Transporting the Juice

Bring a cooler with you to keep the cider or juice cold until you reach your home and it can be refrigerated. This will preserve the quality, extend the shelf life, and minimize the growth of bacteria.

For More Information

For additional information on fresh juices and other food related topics, contact:

*McHenry County Department of Health
(815)334-4585*