

# FOOD SAFETY NEWS YOU CAN USE

DECEMBER 2015

## RETAIL FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE:

- > Retail Food Advisory Committee
- > Food Handler Training Reminder
- > Spotlight on Norovirus

### DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

MCDH values your feedback regarding your experience with the Division of Environmental Health.

Please visit our website at [www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info) to complete the Food Protection Program customer satisfaction survey. Click on "Environmental Health" to access the survey located at the top of the webpage.

Your feedback will help us to improve the quality of our services.

McHenry County  
Department of Health  
Division of Environmental Health  
2200 N. Seminary Avenue  
Woodstock, IL 60098  
Office: (815) 334-4585  
Fax: (815) 334-4637  
[www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info)



Earlier this year, the McHenry County Board of Health approved the reinstatement of the Retail Food Advisory Committee. The committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Director of Environmental Health and Board of Health regarding retail food issues in McHenry County. Primary emphasis will be on collaboration, communication, education and access to information by food operators and the general public. The Board of Health is currently seeking interested industry representatives to participate on the committee.

Applications for the committee and a copy of the committee bylaws, which detail the committee composition, terms, officers, meetings, etc. are posted on the Department's website: [www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info) on the Environmental Health page. Upon request, the information can also be faxed or sent via email or regular mail to interested individuals. Regular meetings will be held quarterly, with the first meeting anticipated in early 2016 after the committee appointments have been made by the Board of Health. Some of the topics that may be covered in 2016 include an update of the Food Ordinance, adoption of the FDA Retail Food Code, electronic inspections, and food safety training opportunities.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Division of Environmental Health at 815-334-4585 with any questions that you may have.

---

## ILLINOIS FOOD HANDLER TRAINING

The Illinois Food Handling Regulation Enforcement Act requires all restaurant food handlers (excluding an IDPH Food Service Sanitation Manager certificate holder) to complete an approved (2) hour food handler training course. Operators are required to maintain proof of course completion for all food handlers at the food facility.

Nursing homes, licensed daycares, hospitals, schools, long-term care and retail food facilities will be required to complete food handler training beginning July 2016. Courses can be found by going to [www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info) on the Food Protection Program webpage under Environmental Health. Staff will be requesting documentation of food handler training during routine inspections.

## SPOTLIGHT ON NOROVIRUS

Noroviruses are a group of related viruses that affect the intestinal tract causing gastrointestinal illness. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that as many as half of all foodborne illnesses can be attributed to Norovirus. Norovirus causes up to 21 million cases of acute gastroenteritis each year.

Noroviruses are very communicable; exposure to a small number of virus particles can cause illness. Symptoms of a Norovirus infection include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, body aches, headache, tiredness and low grade fever typically 24-48 hours after exposure. Symptoms commonly last 24-60 hours. Illness is typically most severe in young children, the elderly and immunocompromised individuals.

Humans are the only source of noroviruses and people can come into contact with noroviruses in a variety of ways. These include close contact with an infected person, contacting surfaces contaminated with the viruses, or consuming contaminated food, water or ice. Foods commonly associated with Norovirus outbreaks are ice, leafy greens, fruits and shellfish.

To avoid a food-borne illness due to Noroviruses, food operators should:

- Obtain foods, water, and ice only from approved, reliable sources.
- Wash produce thoroughly before use.
- Cook shellfish thoroughly.
- Avoid providing common foods unless the appropriate sneeze protection and serving utensils are available.
- Ensure food employees avoid hand contact with ready-to-eat foods by using appropriate utensils, ice and food scoops, deli tissue, etc.
- Encourage food employees to report illness.
- Exclude ill employees from the food establishment for at least 48 hours after symptoms subside.
- Ensure employees wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after using the restroom and before preparing foods.
- Clean and sanitize utensils, counters, food contact surfaces and other common touch surfaces properly and at frequent intervals throughout the day.

**Food-borne illness is preventable.** Staff is available to provide food safety education on Norovirus and a variety of other topics to foodservice personnel, individuals, community groups or organizations and students of all ages. Please contact the Division of Environmental Health at 815-334-4585 Monday – Friday from 8 am to 4:30 pm. If you suspect a food-borne illness, contact the Department at the same number. For after hour and weekend emergencies, call 815-344-7421. Visit [www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info), [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov), [www.dph.illinois.gov](http://www.dph.illinois.gov), [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for additional information.

---

### Contact Information

**Michael Eisele**

Field Staff Supervisor  
MSEisele@co.mchenry.il.us  
815-334-4585

**Patricia Corn**

Food Program Coordinator  
PKCorn@co.mchenry.il.us  
815-334-4585

**Sam Craig**

Environmental Health Educator  
SXCraig@co.mchenry.il.us  
815-334-4834

---