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# FOOD SAFETY

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## Going Green!

The Environmental Health department is Going Green and Paperless!

We will be sending the newsletter and updates by email.

Send your request for the email newsletter and any updates by sending your email address to:

[EnvironmentalHealth@rqhealth.ca](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@rqhealth.ca)



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## Food Safe Level 1: 2012 Classes

|                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Wednesday, January 11  | Thursday, March 27 |
| Wednesday, January 25  | Tuesday, April 17  |
| Wednesday, February 08 | Tuesday, April 26  |
| Tuesday, February 28   | Tuesday, May 15    |
| Thursday, March 15     | Wednesday, June 06 |

All sessions are from 08:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

At the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre Auditorium.

All students **MUST** pre-register for all classes.

Registration will **NOT** be accepted at any class.

For more information please call (306) 766-7755.

### FOOD SAFE LEVEL 1

### NIGHT COURSE AVAILABLE IN 2012!

Wednesday, February 08 **AND** Thursday, February 09  
from 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

**\*\* This is a 2 night class. \*\***  
**\*\* You must attend both nights \*\***

Please see page 478 of the 2011/2012 Regina SaskTel Phone Book for a map of the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre.

# Reusable Shopping Bags

## Are Reusable Grocery Bags Safe?

Canadians are becoming environmentally conscious. We recycle paper. Some people reuse plastic shopping bags. Others discard their plastic bags but we now know plastic shopping bags decompose very slowly. Many Canadians are choosing reusable cloth bags for carrying many different things.

Reusable bags are seen in grocery stores, department stores, schools, workplaces and recreation centers. When the bags are carried and set down they transfer bacteria, parasites, viruses and mould from one place to another. The microbes can be transferred into the bags from the contents.

Raw hamburger can carry *E. coli*. Raw poultry can carry *Salmonella*. Fish may carry parasites. Juices from any of these can leak onto the bag or anything in the bag. The microbes in the juice then contaminate whatever they touch. Microbes on anything put into the bag may cross-contaminate anything that the bag carries afterwards.

In the check-out line, the previous customer's dirty bags might contaminate your bags. The store clerk who packs your bags may have handled the dirty bags of another customer.



Here are some safety tips for use reusable cloth bags.

- Separate meat, fish and poultry from other foods. Wrap meats in separate plastic bags before placing them in the reusable bag. This will help prevent juices leaking onto other items in the bag or the bag itself.
- Wash reusable bags after each use. Use hot soapy water. Dry on the highest setting.
- Reusable plastic bins should be washed after each use, also.
- Use the grocery bags only for groceries.
- Label the bags (e.g. meat, produce, canned, frozen) and place items into their labeled bag.
- Use book bags only for books. Use the gym bag only for gym clothes. Wash these bags frequently.
- Do not store reusable bags in the car. Higher temperatures and humidity in summer will promote growth of moulds on the bags.
- Refrigerate meats and produce as soon as you get home.
- Clean your kitchen counters after you put the food away. The bags or bins on the counter may have left unwanted microbes.
- Always Remember to:
  - Use safe food handling methods in your kitchen: and,
  - Cook food thoroughly.

## What if a Customer Gets Ill?

Would you know what to do if a customer called and said he got sick after eating in your restaurant? There are two things at stake in this situation: your customers' health and your reputation. The quicker you act to protect your customers, the less damage will be done to your business by a foodborne illness outbreak. Resist the urge to cover it up.

## Don't Throw it Away

If you suspect a particular food, stop serving it immediately, but don't throw it away. Put it in the refrigerator, so it can be tested if necessary. It may help to have the food sampled. Report the incident to your Public Health Inspector right away. They will work with you to find and solve the problem and to prevent it from happening again.

Here's what you can do in this situation:

- If you suspect a particular food, stop serving it.
- Save the suspect food and label it "do not use."
- Call your district Public Health Inspector.
- Call the business owner or headquarters.

Saskatchewan restaurant and food service inspections are carried out by the Public Health Inspectors. Public Health Inspectors inspect food-related facilities to verify that safe food-handling practices are being followed. Public Health Inspectors also teach Safe Food Handling courses.

## To contact a Public Health Inspector in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region please call:

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Regina          | 306-766-7755 |
| Fort Qu'Appelle | 306-332-3312 |
| Indian Head     | 306-695-5232 |

## ABCs of Clean Restrooms

People rarely say "You've got a really clean toilet." Although they don't say it, they often judge the cleanliness of the kitchen by what they can see of the restroom.

Keeping the restrooms clean is just as important, in terms of the establishment's reputation, as keeping the kitchen spotless. You may have an immaculate preparation area, but if you have a dirty restroom, your customers will presume this is how you manage sanitation in general.

Here are some things you can do to make sure the restrooms will pass inspection by your customer or by your Public Health Inspector.

- Clearly assign responsibility for cleaning restrooms.
- Set a routine time for major cleaning, such as two hours before the lunch or dinner rush.
- The manager should check the restrooms thirty minutes before the lunch or dinner crowd arrives.
- Assign someone to monitor the restroom during the lunch and dinner period.
- Train employees to report any problems to the manager and to clean up if it is their responsibility.
- Remind staff to wash their hands after using the restroom — and after cleaning the restroom.
- Never store food or food supplies in a restroom.



## Wash your hands!

**Proper and frequent hand washing is the best way you can prevent the spread of disease!**



Thorough handwashing with running water and plain soap works better than sanitizers, the CDC says. Washing with plain soap and water reduces the number of microbes on hands by mechanical action rather than by killing the bacteria and viruses that cause disease. Washing with soap and water removes 99% of the microbes when properly done.

Hand sanitizers *might* be effective in between proper handwashing, but they should **NOT** be considered a substitute for soap and water handwashing.

### What is the best way to wash your hands?

- Wet hands with warm water.
- Use liquid soap and build a lather.
- Scrub all surfaces of hands including backs of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails for at least 20 seconds
- Rinse hands in warm running water and dry hands with a paper towel.

It is estimated that one out of three people does not wash their hands after using the restroom. So these tips are very important when you are out in public.

## Test Yourself

1. You can help to make sure your restroom passes inspection by your customers if you:
  - a. Check the restrooms yourself thirty minutes before lunch and dinner.
  - b. Assign someone to monitor the restroom during lunch and dinner service.
  - c. Get your employees to check throughout the day and empty baskets and mop up spills.
  - d. All of the above.
2. If a customer becomes ill and you think it might have been because of a contaminated food from your establishment:
  - a. Immediately throw the food away.
  - b. Stop serving the food, but don't throw it away, label it "do not use."
  - c. Do nothing until you get more information.
  - d. None of the above.

