

# FRONT BURNER

FROM YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

## RESTAURANTS CAN PROVIDE HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN

*Long gone are the days when restaurant eating was reserved for special occasions. These days, eating away from home is a way of life for many families with school age children. In fact, Canadian figures show that almost a third of family food dollars are spent in restaurants.*



### ARE KIDS EATING HEALTHY?

Unfortunately, this change in family eating patterns appears to be having a negative impact on children's food choices. Fast food dining has been linked to an increase in the consumption of high calorie, low-nutrient menu choices like soft drinks and french fries. Dinners eaten at home, on the other hand, tend to provide healthier fare, including more fruit and vegetables, fewer fried foods and soft drinks, along with less saturated and trans fat.

The results of the local Child Health Survey, carried out in 2003 by the health unit in cooperation with local school boards, showed many local children may not be eating enough healthy foods or be active enough. In fact, it appears that many local children may not even be meeting the minimum recommendations in Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating (available from the health unit).

### PARENTS LOOKING FOR NUTRITIOUS CHOICES

Parents are increasingly aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and are trying to improve children's eating and activity patterns. The reality is that restaurant eating is likely to remain a part of most family's busy lives. The Child Health Survey found that two-thirds of surveyed Simcoe County families ate at least one meal away from home each week.

But restaurants and other eating venues don't have to be the less nutritious choice. With some menu changes you can make healthier eating easier for young families who eat out. Here are just a few examples:

- ☒ provide smaller portions, e.g. child-size or half-size servings
- ☒ provide fresh fruit and/or low fat fruit yogurt as dessert options
- ☒ offer milk (or juice) as a substitute for pop at no extra cost
- ☒ offer a low-fat option like a baked potato, rice or bread instead of fries
- ☒ feature some menu items that are baked or grilled instead of deep fried

Parents want the best for their children. Healthy eating supports proper growth and development, reduces the long term risk of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart problems, and combines with physical activity to help children stay at a healthy weight. By adding some appealing choices, your restaurant can be a preferred dining spot for health-conscious parents.



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## Answers To Go

### How do I safely cook a turkey?

- **Never** slow-cook turkey. Preheat oven at 177C(350F) and cook until turkey reaches minimum internal temperature of 82C(180F).
- The stuffing should reach a minimum internal temperature of 74C(165F).
- For whole turkey: at end of cooking time, remove meat from heat and insert a probe thermometer into the thickest part of the breast or thigh meat, ensure thermometer does not touch any bone. Cook until turkey reaches minimum internal temperature of 82C(180F).

**Don't forget!** - always wash and sanitize the thermometer and all utensils used on raw or partially cooked foods before using them to check foods again.

# OUTBREAK FILES

## YOUR BURGER'S DONE AT 71

On a warm sunny afternoon in July, 129 children, staff and visitors to a summer camp feasted on a farewell luncheon of hotdogs, hamburgers and salads.

Two days later, eight children and two staff were ill with symptoms of abdominal pain, vomiting and bloody diarrhea. The camp called their local public health unit and an outbreak was declared.

### THE INVESTIGATION

Health inspectors were sent to the camp to inspect water and food sources, to review cleaning and sanitizing of cabins and equipment, and to search for any clues as to why so many people were getting sick. A few days after the outbreak was recognized, the lab results of stool samples from ill campers came back – **positive for *E.coli* 0157:H7**.

In total, 27 cases of *E.coli* 0157:H7 were confirmed, six children were admitted to hospital and one child was hospitalized with kidney complications.

*E.coli* are bacteria commonly found in the intestines of humans and animals. Some types of *E.coli* are not harmful to people while others, such as *E.coli* 0157:H7 (also called hamburger disease) may cause serious illness. *E.coli* 0157:H7 can be found in different foods such as contaminated ground beef, unpasteurized apple juice, dry cured salami and raw milk, and may also be found in contaminated water. When the water source tested satisfactory and free from *E.coli*, the investigation soon concentrated on the hamburgers served at the farewell luncheon.



### WHAT WENT WRONG WITH THE HAMBURGERS?

Half an hour prior to lunch, hamburgers were taken out of the refrigerator for barbequing. More than 100 hamburgers were prepared in less than an hour on a domestic barbeque. Food staff checked some hamburgers occasionally for pinkness to determine if they needed further cooking.

The only way to know for sure that the proper temperature is consistently reached is to use a food probe thermometer. **Ground beef always needs to be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 71C(160F)**. Colour change alone (no longer pink) is **not** an adequate way of determining if disease-causing bacteria in the food have been killed. Barbeques may not provide the same amount of heat over the entire cooking area, so some hamburgers may reach 71C(160F) before others, therefore all hamburgers must be checked.

The camp probably could have prevented the *E.coli* 0157:H7 outbreak by applying sound HACCP principles and changing the way they cooked the ground beef. To reduce your risk of contracting *hamburger disease*, remember – **your burger's done at 71!**

## RECIPE MAKEOVER

### ORANGE-GINGER BEEF STIR FRY (SERVES 25)

3 cup orange juice  
1 ½ cup chicken broth  
¼ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce  
1 ½ cup cider vinegar  
2 ¼ cup mandarin orange juice (drained from can)  
2 ¼ cup canned mandarin oranges  
3 tbsp peeled gingerroot or ½ tsp ginger  
¾ cup cornstarch  
3 tbsp olive or canola oil  
25 3-4 oz beef strips  
3 cup diced green pepper  
3 cup diced red pepper  
2 ½ cup diced onion  
6 cups converted rice

Original Recipe courtesy of Aramark Canada Ltd and the Simcoe County Eat Smart! Cafeteria Program.

**Wash hands** well with warm water and soap.

**Wash all vegetables** under cold running water, dice vegetables on a sanitized cutting board and place on clean plate and set aside. Combine juice, broth, soy, ginger, vinegar, mandarin oranges and cornstarch. Bring to a boil and heat until thick and clear.

On the grill, heat ½ the oil to smoking point. **Wash hands and sanitize** utensils and work surfaces after contact with raw beef. Stir beef quickly until fully cooked. **Keep hot** at 60C(140F) until use. In the remaining oil, stir-fry green and red pepper until tender. Add onions. Stir-fry for 1 minute.

Combine vegetables with beef. Pour sauce over beef mixture. Mix gently to coat.

Cook rice as instructed. Serve beef mixture over 125ml rice. Boost fibre intake by serving this dish with a brown rice like basmati.

**Refrigerate** any leftovers immediately at 4C(40F) or colder.

## the STOCK POT

The Child Health Survey is now available on the health unit's website [www.simcoehealth.org](http://www.simcoehealth.org). Read about children and family's eating behaviours.



For a free copy of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* visit the health unit's website [www.simcoehealth.org](http://www.simcoehealth.org) or call Health Connection at 721-7520 (1-877-721-7520 in South Simcoe).



For a detailed fact sheet on turkey, the how-to of thawing, preparing, cooking and serving the turkey, as well as what to do with the leftovers visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency website at [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca).

HEALTH CONNECTION

721-7520  
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#### Note from the Nutritionist:

Dark green and red vegetables are high in vitamins and minerals. Choosing a variety of colourful vegetables every day will help you meet your nutrient requirements.

