



# LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY Health Department

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## **IR Health & Science Section Health Brief – Tuesday, June 10, 2008 Edition**

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### **Food Safety Requirements for Group Functions**

*E.coli*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, Botulism. Heard of any of these? There are many illnesses that can be acquired from food. Ever had diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting? You may have consumed the germs that cause such illnesses while eating or drinking. Most of the germs that cause this type of illness have to be ingested in order to make you sick. Foodborne illness can also cause blood poisoning, inflammation of the lining of the brain, kidney failure, paralysis, and death, especially in infants and children, elderly, pregnant women, and people with compromised immunity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 76 million people, or one out of four people, gets sick from food *per year*. And it may not be the last meal eaten that makes you sick. The most common incubation time for illnesses acquired from food is from 12-48 hours, but depending on which germ is the culprit, incubation times can range from immediate to 70 days.

In order to prevent food borne illness, state law requires that everyone who serves food to the public contact his or her local health department prior to doing so. It doesn't matter if the food is free or if there's a charge. Sanitarians at the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department evaluate menus and the plans for preparation of food. They also provide education on food safety. There is no charge for nonprofit groups or fundraising events.

Preparing and serving food for a large group in a location other than what you are used to can be a real challenge. Remember that what seems like an easy and fun activity has the potential to make lots of people sick.

The Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department also offers a free food safety class once a month, available to anyone. Call 4HEALTH (443-2584) for more information. If you plan to provide food to the public, you should attend this class.

For additional information on food safety, please visit <http://www.co.lewis-clark.mt.us/health> and click on "Keeping Kids Healthy." The application for serving food to the public can be found by clicking on "Licensed Establishments." For applications to be mailed or emailed, call 443-2584.

*The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department's mission is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis & Clark County residents.*

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