



HUME CITY COUNCIL **HUME FOOD NEWS**

Winter 2020

 hume.vic.gov.au



SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES

We understand that businesses in Hume City are feeling the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and support is available.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic is being felt around the world and it is causing extraordinary social, health and economic difficulties.

Council is grateful for the assistance packages provided by the federal and state governments and the extraordinary measures to assist the community in dealing with the impact of this pandemic.

Additionally, Council has announced additional support for businesses:

- Waiving Food Act registrations in 2020/21.
- Waiving all outdoor dining area permit fees and licence fees for 2020/21.
- Providing rent relief for tenants occupying Council facilities for up to six months on a case-by-case basis, where the tenant can demonstrate that their business has been adversely impacted by COVID-19.
- Looking at ways to provide additional opportunities for local businesses to tender for Council contracts with the aim to support local jobs for local people.

Food Act inspections and registrations will still occur, but no registration/renewal fee will be charged.

Mental health resources and support

There is a range of information, strategies and expert advice to help support your social and emotional wellbeing during this pandemic.

Ahead for Business

Help for small business owners including tips for mental health and self-assessment tools.

aheadforbusiness.org.au

Heads up

Explore a range of resources and advice on supporting the mental health of business owners and their staff.

headsup.org.au

Lifeline Australia

A crisis support service offering short term support at any time for people who are having difficulty coping or staying safe.

13 11 14

lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue

Mental health information and support for all Victorians.

1300 224 636

beyondblue.org.au

MensLine

Crisis support for men.

1300 78 99 78

mensline.org.au

Visit hume.vic.gov.au/togetherinbusiness for more information.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) AND FOOD SAFETY

What you need to know about your responsibilities.

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) have identified that there is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted through food.

Even so, maintaining good hygiene practices within your business has never been more important. Cleaning and sanitation measures will minimise the risk of transmission.

Everyone should practice good hygiene when preparing and handling food – such as washing your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds and cleaning and sanitising food preparation surfaces.

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, (such as fever, chills or sweats, cough, sore throat), however mild, should get tested. They should also minimise contact with others, which means staying home and not having visitors.

Businesses need to follow social distancing requirements of the Australian Government.

FSANZ are working with the Department of Health as well as the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, state and territory health authorities and international counterparts to ensure the most up-to-date information is available for those working in the food industry.

Visit foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/safety/Pages/NOVEL-CORONAVIRUS-AND-FOOD-SAFETY.aspx to find more advice for food businesses.

Where can I find more information?

- Victorian Department of Health and Human Services:
dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus
- Business Victoria:
business.vic.gov.au – visit the coronavirus (COVID-19) business support page.
- Australian workplace laws:
coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au
- Safe Work Australia:
safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces



BEWARE POISONOUS MUSHROOMS

A number of serious mushroom poisonings occurred in Victoria during May. Unless you are an expert, it is best not to pick and eat wild mushrooms.

Poisonous mushrooms including Death Cap mushrooms and Yellow-staining mushrooms are currently growing abundantly around Victoria as a result of the recent heavy rains.

Death Cap mushrooms



Consuming just one Death Cap mushroom (*Amanita phalloides*) can kill an adult. These mushrooms typically grow under oak trees and are 40–160 millimetres in diameter. The cap ranges in colour from pale yellow-green to olive brown and the ridges on the underside of the cap are white.

Yellow-staining mushrooms



The Yellow-staining mushroom (*Agaricus xanthodermus*) is the cause of most poisonings due to ingestion of wild fungi in Victoria. This mushroom looks very similar to edible wild mushrooms and cultivated mushrooms. The Yellow-staining mushroom can grow in large troops in lawns and gardens and is much more common than edible mushrooms in urban areas.

Poisoning: what to do

If it is suspected that a poisonous mushroom has been eaten, do not wait for symptoms to occur. Contact the Victorian Poisons Information Centre (VPIC) on 13 11 26.

In most cases, the sooner treatment can begin, the better the outcome. For further information you can refer to the Better Health website at betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/fungi-poisoning

CHANGES IN FOOD SAFETY SINCE LOCKDOWN

The Food Safety Information Council's report card on Australia's food safety record shows that food-borne illness has declined in Australia since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

In Australia, there are an estimated 4.1 million cases of food-borne illness each year. There are approximately 31,920 hospitalisations and 86 deaths. These figures point to how important food safety is, especially in the food industry.

Cathy Moir, Food Safety Information Council Chair, stated that since the lockdowns began back in March, "reported rates of Campylobacter and Salmonella infections per 100,000 people in Australia have almost halved compared with the previous two years."

The decrease in food-borne illness cases could be related to the decrease in people gathering together due to COVID-19, as the risk of food-borne illness incidents are higher when food is prepared in bulk and served to groups of people (such as self-serve and buffets).

Despite the decline, there are areas that need to be improved. Moir stated that the 2019 hand washing study revealed that "29 per cent of Australians said they didn't always wash their hands after going to the toilet and more than a third admit they don't always wash their hands before touching food."

Even though more people are taking hand washing seriously due to COVID-19, old habits are hard to break and there is a concern that some Australians will stop washing their hands as much after the pandemic ends.

It is essential, as food businesses continue to reopen across the country, that people continue to wash their hands properly and frequently – especially those that work in the food industry. It is also essential that food businesses ensure that all food handlers within their business have valid Statements of Attainment. If not, staff must be enrolled into a nationally recognised food safety training course.

This article was adapted from Food Safety Report Card Shows Food-borne Illness Decline, published by the Australian Institute of food safety (foodsafety.com.au) on Monday 8 June 2020.



Know your bacteria



CLOSTRIDIUM PERFRINGENS

Clostridium perfringens (*C. perfringens*) is a bacterium widespread in the environment and in the intestines of people and animals.

It can form spores that are very tough and are not killed by cooking or boiling. It can also produce a toxin that makes people ill.

What illness does it cause?

It causes gastroenteritis.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include abdominal cramps and diarrhoea, which usually start six to 24 hours after eating contaminated food. There is usually no fever or vomiting.

Most people have mild symptoms and recover quickly (within a day or less).

Who can get sick?

Anyone can get sick with *C. perfringens* if food is highly contaminated.

Symptoms can be more severe and last longer in elderly people, pregnant women, young children and people with weakened immune systems.

Where does it come from?

C. perfringens is widespread in the environment, people and animals, and the heat-resistant spores can be found in soil and plants (such as dried spices).

Poor hygiene (e.g. not washing hands properly) can also cause food to become contaminated.

Common foods linked to illness include meat and poultry, gravies and pre-cooked foods, especially spiced and herbed dishes.

How can people get sick?

By eating contaminated food that hasn't been properly cooked and cooled, especially food prepared in large quantities.

By reheating food too slowly, or letting it sit at warm temperatures for hours.

How can illness be prevented?

- Cook food thoroughly (75°C or hotter) and serve it immediately or keep it hot (60°C or hotter) before serving.
- If cooked food is going to be stored to use later, cool it quickly: put it in the fridge (or freezer) as soon as it stops steaming. Divide large amounts of hot food into smaller containers to let it cool faster.
- Reheat food quickly (75°C or hotter).
- Ensure hands and equipment are clean when preparing and eating food.

Source: foodstandards.gov.au

