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Irradiate *This*

One way to eliminate *E. coli* and other potentially harmful bacteria in ground beef, chicken, and other foods is to irradiate them.

Irradiation's big plus: It kills bugs dead. But there are a few reasons to be concerned about the process. It involves moving radioactive material around the country—always a risky proposition. And it doesn't prevent sloppy handling at the plant, at home, or in restaurants, which could recontaminate food after it's been zapped.

Whether you can't wait to buy irradiated beef and other products or you're determined to avoid them, one thing is clear: Consumers need to be able to identify irradiated foods at the supermarket and in restaurants. That's what nine out of ten people said in a nationally representative telephone poll of 1,000 adults that we commissioned in June of 1996.

If you agree, please write or e-mail the officials listed below and tell them that irradiated foods need to carry a prominent disclosure, in easy-to-read type, on the front of the package. Thank you.

Thomas J. Billy, FSIS Administrator
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Rm. 331-E
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250
(Tom.Billy@usda.gov)

Jane E. Henney, FDA Commissioner
(see coupon for address and e-mail)

Pls. don't irradiate foods!

Unconscientious Resisters

Antibiotics kill bacteria. That's why they save lives...except when they don't work.

Here's at least part of the problem: Antibiotics are routinely fed to cattle, hogs, and poultry to make them grow faster. That major–and unnecessary–use boosts the odds that bacteria will become immune to antibiotics. And if you happen to get an infection caused by one of those resistant bacteria, the antibiotic your doctor prescribes could be useless. That could kill you.

We have filed a petition with the Food and Drug Administration asking that medically useful antibiotics be banned from animal feed. You can help by signing and mailing this coupon or, better yet, by writing or e-mailing in your own words.

To: Commissioner Jane E. Henney ✓
Parklawn Building, Rm. 14-71
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
(JHENNEY@oc.fda.gov)

From:

Susan & Malvin Goodger
729 Mandarin Lane
Chesapeake, VA
USA 23323

As a member of the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), I urge you to save human lives by banning the use of medically useful antibiotics in animal feed. Adding antibiotics to feed in order to promote growth can make bacteria resistant to those antibiotics. And that can leave physicians with no way to treat life-threatening bacterial infections in humans. That's why I support the petition filed by CSPI.

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The contents of NAH are not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained from a qualified health professional.

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The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is the non-profit health-advocacy group that publishes Nutrition Action Healthletter. CSPI mounts educational programs and presses for changes in government and corporate policies.

antibiotics have completely destroyed my immune system so I'm not able to write a formal letter.

S. Goodger

Nov. 19/99

HELP MAKE FOOD SAFE

Washington needs to hear your views on how to prevent food poisoning. You can bet policymakers are hearing from industry! We urge you to mail this coupon (or e-mail Commissioner Henney at execsec@oc.fda.gov).

To: FDA Commissioner
Jane E. Henney
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

From:
Susan Goodger

Susan & Malvin Goodger
729 Mandarin Lane
Chesapeake, VA
USA 23323

As a member of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, I urge you to help make the food supply safer by enforcing tough standards against dangerous bacteria in food. At a minimum, you need to:

- **Maintain the "zero-tolerance" for deadly strains of *Listeria* in foods like cheese and dairy products.**
- **Set tough new standards for *Vibrio vulnificus* in shellfish.**
- **Increase testing for those deadly bacteria.**
- **Make eggs safer by requiring farmers to check flocks for *Salmonella enteritidis*. Processors should pasteurize any eggs that might be contaminated.**

Nov. 19, 1999

The damage: an estimated 224,000 people sickened. In Minnesota, over half the victims had diarrhea that lasted a week or more plus (in most cases) fever and chills and (in nearly half) bloody stools. A quarter had to be hospitalized.

What's more, when researchers at the CDC surveyed Schwan's customers in Georgia, they found that in nearly a third of the 72 households that had Schwan's ice cream in the freezer when a family member heard about the recall, someone in the family later ate the ice cream anyway.

"In 90 percent of those households, people just didn't believe there was a problem with the ice cream," says the CDC's Laurence Slutsker.

WHAT TO DO

- Watch for recalls in the local paper or on the news. Don't eat the food, even if it appears to be safe.
- Avoid raw (unpasteurized) milk and cheeses made from raw milk, unless they've been aged for at least 60 days (it should say on the label). All could harbor a bacterium called *Listeria*, which is especially dangerous for pregnant women and their fetuses.
- You can also get *Listeria* from soft cheeses (like feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined, or Mexican-style "queso blanco"—whether they've been pasteurized or not), but not from cottage cheese, cream cheese, or hard cheeses.

EGGS

"This morning there were 70 people who were symptomatic and by lunchtime it was around 100 and this afternoon it is about 120," Curtis Thorpe of the Henrico (Virginia) Health Department told the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* in June.

All of the 100+ victims had worked or eaten at an International House of Pancakes (IHOP) restaurant outside of Richmond. The culprit: *Salmonella enteritidis* in eggs used to make French toast that hadn't been cooked enough to kill the bacteria. When the Richmond IHOP re-opened, it switched to pasteurized eggs.

WHAT TO DO

- Avoid foods that traditionally use raw eggs unless the eggs have been pasteurized. That includes Caesar salad dressing, tiramisu, chocolate mousse, lemon (or other) meringue pie, and homemade ice cream. The eggs in lasagna, baked ziti, French toast, or rice, banana, or bread pudding can also be undercooked.
- Keep eggs in their original cartons, and use them within a month or so.
- Discard any cracked eggs.
- Thoroughly cook all egg dishes (to a temperature of 145°F), including French toast and omelets. Cook fried or sunnyside-up eggs until the yolks are firm.
- Don't lick cake batter, raw cookie dough, or homemade frosting that contains raw eggs. If you can't resist licking, bake with pasteurized egg products (like Egg Beaters).
- Store-bought eggnog is pasteurized. If you make your own, use pasteurized eggs. If you use whole eggs, gradually heat the egg-milk mixture to 160°F or until it coats a metal spoon.

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Salmonella from cantaloupe. Hepatitis A from strawberries. *Cryptosporidium* from scallions. *Shigella* from parsley. The list of disease-causing microbes in fruits and vegetables is almost as varied as our supply of fresh produce. A few key examples:

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PM

33 USA

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