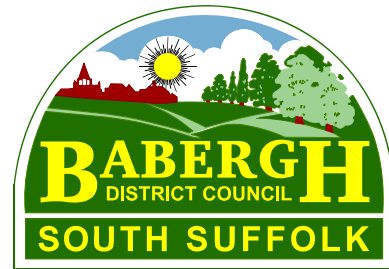


# Babergh Foodwise



ISSUE 16

## Are you doing all you can to prevent food poisoning?



Chicken liver pate... likely cause of recent food poisoning outbreak

**I**n Issue 15 we reported that across the Babergh District and Ipswich Borough recently we have been seeing higher than usual numbers of cases of Campylobacter food poisoning. However, these have generally been sporadic cases, ie cases of Campylobacter with no apparent link between them.

Back in June though, we were

contacted by officers from Forest Heath District Council regarding a wedding reception which had been held in their district. A number of guests had been ill, and at that stage one person had been confirmed to be infected with Campylobacter. A joint investigation of the outbreak revealed that the wedding guests had been served chicken liver paté as part of the wedding breakfast. *continued overleaf*

### FIRTH'S FOCUS

**W**elcome to the Autumn 2010 edition of Foodwise - Babergh's newsletter for food businesses.

Whilst times are difficult for everyone at the moment, I do hope your business is thriving and you have had a busy and profitable summer.



Ensuring the safety of the food you produce, serve or sell is a primary concern not only to protect your customers but also your profits. When things go wrong a fine from a court is possible but it is even more likely that customers who have been made ill by unsafe food will wish to pursue their own civil action for damages. Read inside about two recent food poisoning outbreaks which have had such an impact on the caterers involved and learn what you can do to reduce the risk of a similar event in your business.

We touch on a health and safety topic in this edition which is relevant to many of our food businesses - the use of liquefied petroleum gas. Officers of the Food and Safety Regulation team will be visiting businesses with bulk LPG tanks over the coming months to ensure that they are being maintained in a safe condition. We give you some top tips on how to ensure you are using LPG safely.

And finally, we have recently started running Level 2 Food Safety in Catering Courses (the current equivalent of the old Basic Food Hygiene course) at Babergh.

So if you or your staff need some formal training, who better to be trained by than officers who are enforcing the law in food businesses on a daily basis - you can be sure their knowledge and experiences are bang up to date!



Food poisoning can sometimes be traced to wedding receptions. In June Forest Heath District Council were alerted to a wedding reception where guests were infected by *Campylobacter*

The pâté had been made by frying the chicken livers until they 'had a cooked texture, but were still slightly pink', then blending them with the other ingredients, pressing into a terrine mould and refrigerating. Chicken livers, as is the case with all types of poultry meat and red meat too, are a known source of *Campylobacter* bacteria.

*Campylobacter* is easily killed by thorough cooking, but the cooking method described left some doubt as to whether the cooking had been sufficient in this case. This concern, together with information gathered from wedding guests who had been ill and others that had not been ill, pointed to the chicken liver pâté as the most likely cause of the outbreak.

This example also demonstrates the importance of identifying the food safety hazards arising from the foods you are preparing in

your business, something which most businesses will do by completing the Safe Methods in their Safer Food Better Business pack, or during the development of their own Food Safety Management System. This is particularly important if your menu includes dishes which are lightly cooked or not cooked at all.

In another recent case in the Babergh District, twenty people were made ill when a chocolate mousse made with raw egg was served at a function. Eight of those who were ill were confirmed to have had *Salmonella* food poisoning. The hazard of using raw eggs in ready to eat foods had not been identified in the caterer's Safer Food Better Business pack. Had they have done so, they may have decided to use pasteurised egg in the chocolate mousse, which would have eliminated the risk from *Salmonella* completely.

### **So how can you prevent a similar problem in your business?**

■ Review your menu. Does it contain dishes which are not fully cooked but contain ingredients which may be a source of food poisoning bacteria for example eggs, poultry, offal?

■ If your answer to the above question is yes, are you doing everything possible to reduce the risk of food poisoning? For example could you use pasteurised egg instead of raw shell eggs, or cook duck breasts until they achieve a core temperature of 70°C whilst still maintaining the quality of the dish?

■ Would it be safer to buy some dishes in ready made? Some pâtés for example may be difficult to prepare safely and achieve the quality that you require, but manufacturers have the equipment, control measures and

careful monitoring in place to ensure that this is achieved.

- Review your food safety management system. Does it cover all of the types of food you prepare in your business? Does it still reflect what you actually do? Have your recipes or methods changed since it was first completed? If you are using Safer Food Better Business the 4-weekly reviews in the diary should prompt you to consider these issues.

- Are all of your staff trained in your food safety management system? Are they putting your control measures into practice?

For more advice contact the Food and Safety Regulation team on 01473 825888.

## **Health and Safety Focus: Food Businesses and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)**

Many food businesses in the district use LPG as their gas supply for cooking, particularly those in the more rural areas where mains gas may not be available. Whether the gas is supplied in cylinders or in bulk via an LPG tank there are some hazards and safety measures that you need to be aware of.

### **LPG basic facts and tips:**

- LPG (propane or butane) is a colourless liquid which readily evaporates into a gas. It has no smell, although it will normally have an odour added to detect leaks.

- When mixed with air, the gas can burn or explode when it meets a source of ignition. It is heavier than air, so it tends to sink towards the ground. LPG can flow for long distances along the

ground, and can collect in drains, gullies and cellars.

### **Therefore, you must:**

- Keep all cylinders in a safe, well-ventilated place, preferably in the open air, and away from occupied buildings, boundaries and sources of ignition and of heat;

- Make sure cylinders are properly secured and are kept upright;

- Keep rubbish and anything combustible well away from the cylinders and tanks, and keep weeds and grass in the vicinity cut down. Don't use a chlorate-based weed-killer, as it can be a fire hazard;

- Not allow any sources of ignition near the cylinders or tanks. Exceptions are items purpose designed to use LPG, such as gas-fired barbecues;



- Not smoke when changing cylinders;

- Keep vehicles well away from the installation;

- Make sure that pipework or flexible hose from cylinders to the point of use is protected against accidental damage, and is properly supported. For underground piping, make sure you know the route it takes, and avoid putting anything in the ground which may damage the pipework;

- Keep any security fencing provided for tanks in good

condition, and keep the gate(s) locked shut. If there is no fencing, keep the tank valve cover locked;

- Ensure there are adequate arrangements for inspection and maintenance of the tank and its equipment. This is normally arranged by your LPG supplier. Keep all the paperwork relating to the installation for reference;

- Read the operating instructions and the emergency actions, and ensure that everyone who needs to, knows them and follows them carefully;

- Keep people not involved with the installation well away from it, particularly children;

- Make sure that any above-ground pipework from tanks to the point of use is protected against accidental damage, and is properly supported. For underground piping, make sure

you know the route it takes, and avoid putting anything in the ground which may damage the pipework;

- Report any equipment failure or damage to your supplier without delay, and ask them for advice about what you should do.

For more information on the safe use of LPG

- in cylinders see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/chis5.pdf>

- in tanks see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/chis4.pdf>



Following Lord Gill's report into an explosion caused by a leak of LPG on 11 May 2004 when nine people died and many more were injured at the ICL Plastics factory in Maryhill, Glasgow (see <http://www.theiclinquiry.org/>) the Health and Safety Executive and Local Authorities have embarked upon a programme of inspections of bulk LPG tanks to identify those with underground pipework where there may be a risk of leakage and explosion. If you use such a tank in your business you can expect to be contacted by officers from Babergh's Food and Safety team in the coming months. In the meantime, ask yourself:

- Are any parts of the LPG pipework buried?
- Is any buried pipework metallic?
- If metallic, does the pipework lack effective corrosion protection at any point along its length?

If you have answered yes (or don't know) to all these questions then you are advised to seek further information from your LPG supply company.

For more information contact the Food and Safety team on 01473 825888 or visit the HSE website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg428.pdf>

### **Level 2 Food Safety in Catering**

Babergh is now aiming to offer this one-day course, which is suitable for staff who work in a catering environment, six times a year at the Council Offices. Topics covered in the course are:

- Legislation
- Food safety and hygiene hazards
- Temperature control
- Refrigeration, chilling and cold holding
- Cooking, hot holding and reheating
- Food handling
- Principles of safe food storage
- Cleaning
- Food premises and equipment

The cost is currently £62 which includes lunch and the dates for the next courses are 22 September 2010, 10 November 2010 and 19 January 2011.

- To reserve a place on one of these courses contact the Food and Safety Regulation team on 01473 825888

