

Food Group Newsletter

July 2013 Newsletter for Restaurant Owners

Upcoming Events

Newton Restaurant Meeting
Wednesday, July 10
6:30-8:30pm
American Legion Post 440
Light food and beverage will be served

Topics Discussed:

- New grading system
- Newton's FDA Grant
- Resources for your business
- Questions and feedback

PLEASE RSVP TO

akern@newtonma.gov if you have not already

Restaurant Tip of the Month

Use your health inspector as a resource!



- Ask us questions about violations— we can better assist you with a problem in your establishment if you understand the what, why and how of a violation
- Ask us to explain what we do— we can clarify the science behind what may seem like something minor
- We want to work together with you— we have resources for you to help your business stay compliant, just ask!

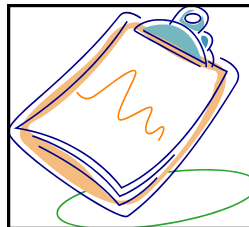
Current Events: Newton's FDA Grant

The Newton Department of Health and Human Services has received a 5-year grant to bring our food safety program into complete alignment with FDA standards. This includes standardizing equipment, inspection reports, writing new regulations and other activities. We have specific objectives outlined for each of the 5 years.

The ultimate goal of the standardization process is to reduce foodborne illness in Newton. There will be a few changes as we complete activities in the grant.

Changes to occur in 2013:

- New look of inspections— We have completely

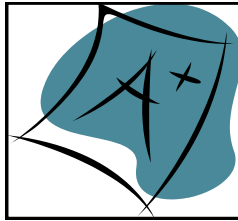


transferred to an electronic inspection software that helps to eliminate paper, and better track inspection reports over time

- Grading system—we will be conducting inspections on a group of pilot restaurants to test our new grading system. More details on page 2.
- Trainings— we will be conducting food safety trainings for you and your food service employees
- Community outreach— as important as it is to reach out to you, the food service industry, it is equally important to reach out to your customers!

Newton's Restaurant Grading System

We will be implementing a grading system based on your inspection report. Your restaurant will be graded using a template we have adapted from Los Angeles, which has been using it for over 10 years with great success.



We will pilot test the grading with randomly selected restaurants in the next month. The grade will NOT count, but the inspection WILL count. The purpose of the pilot is to identify logistical problems before we draft a regulation. Grades will be assigned according to the severity of the violation. During the whole process, we encourage your feedback. We realize it is a big change for you in the short term, but in the long term it will benefit you and the community of restaurant-goers!

We want you to get an A! We have created resources for you to help log cleaning schedules, a worksheet on "how to get an A", and will provide you a tip of the

month, to help you and your restaurant stay on track.

We have created incentives for you to get an A for your restaurant:

- ◆ Get two A's in a row and be placed on our restaurant honor roll: we will post the list on our website, and give you a certificate to post in your restaurant
- ◆ Get two A's in a row and we will decrease the number of visits to your restaurant (by one inspection yearly)
- ◆ Once the grading has started, we will create a GIS map on our website that customers can scroll their mouse over to see grades received by each restaurant
- ◆ Restaurants will have an opportunity to gain points on their grade report if employees attend trainings put on by the health department

We encourage your participation in our upcoming meetings and trainings. We will offer a variety of classes that can help you and your employees get an A and stay compliant with the food code.

Listeria: What you and your restaurant need to know

What is it?

Listeria monocytogenes is a bacterium that can be found in some ready-to-eat foods and can be fatal for pregnant women, newborns, and adults with weakened immune systems.

Where does it grow?

Listeria can grow on uncooked meats and vegetables, soft cheeses, cooked meats (like hot dogs and deli meat) during packaging and in your home fridge.

How do I prevent it at my restaurant?

- Rinse raw vegetables THOROUGHLY under running tap water before eating, cooking, or cutting (even wash it if you're peeling it).
- Scrub firm produce (cucumbers, melons etc.) with a clean produce brush

- Dry the produce with a clean paper towel
- Separate uncooked meats and poultry from vegetables, cooked foods, and ready-to-eat foods
- Wash hands, knives, countertops, and cutting boards after handling and prepping uncooked foods
- Ensure that your refrigerator is at 41° or less by using a thermometer and logging temperature checks
- Clean the walls and shelves of your refrigerator with hot soap and water
- Cook meat and poultry thoroughly, use a meat thermometer to ensure your meats are at 165° when fully cooked.

