



Unpasteurized Juice and Its Safety

There is nothing like having a big glass of freshly squeezed fruit juice as a part of a healthy and nutritious breakfast. However, are you willing to take a chance with unpasteurized juice in your daily diet?

When fruit and vegetables are processed into juice, harmful bacteria that may be present can become part of the finished product. Most juices in the United States (98 percent) are pasteurized to kill harmful bacteria. **Pasteurized** juice is heated to a high temperature for a short time before it is sold. By pasteurizing juice, pathogens (germs), which may be present in the liquid, are killed. The other 2 percent of unpasteurized juice or cider may contain harmful bacteria that make some people sick.

There have been several confirmed cases of *Salmonella serotype Muenchen* reported in the United States and Canada. The illness is associated with drinking unpasteurized orange juice. In the summer of 1999, the United States Food and Drug Administration recalled fruit juice produced by a company in Arizona. The non-pasteurized juice was distributed to retail stores and restaurants through the United States and the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia under private labels. Also recalled was fresh margarita mix with fresh orange juice in half-gallon containers from the same company.

Salmonella Muenchen is one of approximately 2,400 serotypes of *Salmonella* that causes illness in people. Every year, approximately 800,000 to four million cases of *Salmonella* result in 500 deaths in the United States. Children are the most likely to get *Salmonella*. Young children, the elderly and the immunocompromised are the most likely to have severe infections. Symptoms of *Salmonella* include diarrhea, high fever, severe headache, vomiting, nausea and abdominal cramps that develop 12 to 72 hours after infection. Long-term complications can include severe arthritis. The illness usually lasts four to seven days, and most people recover without treatment. *Salmonella* passes from the feces of people or animals to other people or other animals.

Other pathogens sometimes found in unpasteurized juice include *E. coli* O157:H7 (bacteria) and *Cryptosporidium* (parasite).

Juice Safety Requirements

Since November 1999, the United States Food and Drug Administration requires that all unpasteurized juice display a warning label for all juice products. The label will bear a warning:

"THIS PRODUCT HAS NOT BEEN PASTEURIZED AND THEREFORE MAY CONTAIN HARMFUL BACTERIA THAT CAN CAUSE SERIOUS ILLNESS IN CHILDREN, THE ELDERLY AND PERSONS WITH WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEMS."

Juice that is packaged by a processor or in a food establishment such as a grocery store or health food store must be treated under a HACCP plan or be stored under refrigeration and bear the above warning label. For information on Juice HACCP, follow this link: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/%7Ecomm/haccpjui.html>.

Fresh squeezed juice, served at a restaurant or juice bar is not required to be treated, or be processed under a HACCP plan, or have a warning label. Before drinking freshly squeezed juice, ask if it has been treated.

In a food establishment that serves a highly susceptible population, it is against the law to serve pre-packaged, untreated juice bearing a warning label or serve freshly squeezed juice unless it is processed under a HACCP plan.

For this, or any food-safety-related information, please contact
713/794-9200.