

# Health Wise Quarterly

Brought to you by the friendly staff at your

## Environmental Health Services Division



Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD) offers monthly Food Safety Presentations from 3:00PM - 4:30PM. Trainings are held at Rutherford Lane Campus [1520 Rutherford Lane, Building 1, Suite 205](#). Interested in attending? Register by phone 512-978-0300 or via email: [EHSD.service@austintexas.gov](mailto:EHSD.service@austintexas.gov)

October 17, 2017	Requirements for Starting a Food Enterprise and the Inspection Process
November 21, 2017	Requirements and Processes for Submitting a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)
December 19, 2017	Temporary Events and Mobile Vendor Inspections

### Changes to Fees

The City of Austin City Council is reviewing fee changes to services provided by Environmental Health Services Division. Changes are expected to be approved the end of September and new fees are anticipated to go into effect October 1, 2017. However, the exact dates and fee changes are unknown at this time. Once the fee schedule changes have been approved and finalized, the EHSD website will be updated. Keep informed on the fees you are responsible for by checking [online](#), emailing [ehsd.service@austintexas.gov](mailto:ehsd.service@austintexas.gov) or calling 512-978-0300.

## CHANGES TO THE MOBILE VENDING PROGRAM

### CHANGE ONE:

Travis County Fire Marshal's Office will begin conducting Fire & Safety inspections on ALL Travis County Unrestricted Permitted Mobile Vending Units. This will improve the safety of your unit and make mobile food vendor inspections more consistent. For your convenience, these inspections will be conducted at the same time and place as the Health Mobile Vending Permitting Inspections.

### CHANGE TWO:

ALL mobile vending physical permitting inspections of the units will now be by appointment only. This will reduce waiting times and help vendors better manage their closing times. Initial inspections still require a generator or internal power source to check running hot water & refrigeration. If a mobile vending unit has propane, then a yearly gas pressure test will still be needed. Vendors may begin the process 45 days before expiration date to prevent downtime due to expired permits. Plan ahead. Do NOT bring in your mobile vending unit without an appointment. You will not be inspected.

**No exceptions.**

**Tentative start date October 10th.**

### HOW IT WILL WORK:

**Step 1: APPLICATION REVIEW:** On Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:45am-11am come or send an agent to our office with a complete application, notarized CPF agreement, sales tax number, valid government issued ids of owners & responsible parties, and original Certified Food Manager Certificate.

**Step 2: RECEIVE AN APPOINTMENT TIME:** After the application is accepted by Austin Public Health (APH), the vendor will receive a scheduled future date to bring the mobile vending unit. Scheduled times are for 30 minutes. The vending unit must be ready for inspection at the start of the appointment. If the vendor misses the appointment time, they will have to reschedule.

**Step 3: BRING Mobile Vending Unit To The APPOINTMENT:** During your scheduled appointment come or send an agent to our office with the mobile vending unit. Vendors will NOT need to come inside. Inspectors will meet you outside.





## Youth Sports Leagues & Austin Public Health

Summer is ending and the season of autumn approaches, which means youth sports leagues are almost here! The concession stands will once again open their shutters and serve cold drinks and hot food to masses of sports fans. Did you know that there are several ways that youth sports leagues' concession stands can operate in Austin/Travis County? **There's a FREE option, a short-term option, and a long-term option.**

**Free:** Austin Public Health does NOT require a permit if only individually packaged & shelf-stable foods or drinks are served! That means bottled water, soda cans, and sports drinks can be served, since they are only kept cold for the customer's enjoyment and not for safety! Other foods include commercially packaged candies, chips, trail mixes, and whole sealed bags of microwaved popcorn *without the hassle of needing a permit!*

**Short-term:** If, however, the concession stand operators would prefer to sell meats or open foods, like hamburgers, turkey legs, nachos, and Frito pies, then a permit would be needed. This is because these types of foods have a higher potential to cause a foodborne illness, therefore Austin Public Health wants an inspector to check on the operations randomly for safe food handling. The short term option is to obtain a temporary event permit. These are good for up to 14 days each, but there is a limit to 6 permits per calendar year.

**Long-term:** The long term option is to obtain a fixed food establishment permit. This permit is good for an entire year from the time that the permit is approved. This would be the option for you if your season is longer than the maximum of 84 days that temporary event permits could offer.

To obtain permits or for more information, please call our offices at 512-978-0300 or download our applications at <http://austintexas.gov/department/environmental-health-services>

## Unpasteurized Milk and Brucellosis



Raw milk produced by K-Bar Dairy in Paradise, Texas, is being recalled due to contamination with Brucella. Paradise is located in Wise County just West of Fort Worth. A person who drank raw milk from the dairy has been hospitalized with brucellosis.

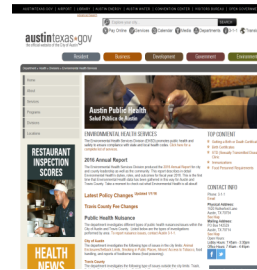
People who consumed milk or milk products from this dairy from June 1, 2017 to August 7, 2017, are at an increased risk for brucellosis and should receive appropriate post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

It is recommended that people drink and eat only pasteurized dairy products (including soft cheese, ice cream, and yogurt).

For more, see Texas Department of State Health Services: [news release](#) and [health alert](#) or the [CDC Health Advisory](#).

## Keep Up To Date and Check out the EHSD Website!

Check our routinely website for updates and information. We recently added a [food safety resource section](#) that includes links for foodborne outbreaks and recalls. [A summary of important changes to the Texas Food Establishment Rules \(TFER\)](#) has also been added to the [Fixed Food Establishment page](#).



## Emergency Response to Hurricane Harvey



Environmental Health Services Division staff are supporting the City of Austin and community partners' response to Hurricane Harvey. Environmental Health Officers are completing food safety inspections and general sanitation inspections for public health safety. Initially inspections were conducted four times a day and as needs have decreased, inspections are completed two times a day. Other staff have worked the Emergency Operations Center, Department Operations Center, volunteered at the shelter, provided Spanish translation to evacuees, and worked at the Multi-Agency Resource Center. An Emergency Shelter Operations guide was created to support agencies and volunteers that do not usually work in food service or food safety. Our team appreciates all the work and support the City of Austin is providing to help others in times of need.

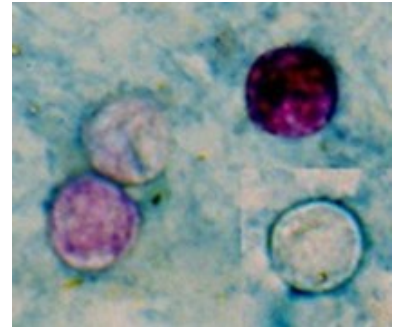
## Cyclospora on the Rise in Texas

Although no common exposure source has yet been identified for the increase in cases this year, past outbreaks in the U.S. have been associated with consumption of imported fresh produce, including fresh cilantro, pre-packaged salad mix, raspberries, basil, snow peas, and mesclun lettuce. Thorough washing of fresh produce is recommended, but may not eliminate the risk of transmission since *Cyclospora* can be difficult to wash off all types of produce. Infection is generally not transmitted directly from person-to-person.

In the past month, 68 cases of cyclosporiasis have been reported in Texas. Ten cases have been reported in Travis County. Six of the 10 cases in Travis County traveled to Mexico over Memorial Day weekend. No restaurant or event clusters or suspect food items have been identified to date.



**Texas Department of State  
Health Services**



[News Release](#)  
[July 17, 2017](#)

A spike in illnesses caused by the parasite *Cyclospora* in June and July is prompting the Texas Department of State Health Services to ask health care providers to be on guard for the illness, pursue testing, and report cases to their local health department. Within the past month, 68 cases have been reported in the state, and DSHS is working with local health departments to gather information about the illnesses and identify a source.

Cyclosporiasis is an intestinal illness caused by consuming food or water contaminated with the microscopic *Cyclospora* parasite. The main symptom is watery diarrhea lasting a few days to a few months. Additional symptoms may include loss of appetite, fatigue, weight loss, abdominal cramps, bloating, increased gas, nausea, vomiting and a low fever. Symptoms may come and go multiple times over a period of weeks or months.

People with symptoms that could be related to *Cyclospora* should contact their health care provider for treatment. A [health advisory](#) issued today asks providers to test patients who have diarrhea lasting more than a few days or diarrhea accompanied by severe loss of appetite or fatigue. Health care providers should promptly report cases so that public health can investigate them and attempt to determine the source in order to head off future cases.

Past outbreaks in the U.S. have been associated with consumption of imported fresh produce, including fresh pre-packaged salad mix, raspberries, basil, snow peas, and mesclun greens. Texas has had multiple outbreaks linked to cilantro.

DSHS recommends thoroughly washing all fresh produce, but that may not entirely eliminate the risk because *Cyclospora* can be very difficult to wash off. Cooking will kill the parasite. Infection is generally not transmitted directly from person-to-person. There were 148 cases of cyclosporiasis in Texas reported last year.

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**(News Media Contact: Chris Van Deusen, DSHS Director of Media Relations, 512-776-7119)**

DSHS Press Office on [Twitter](#)





## OFFICES CLOSED

Plan Accordingly. EHS&D will be **CLOSED** on:

- \* November 10th for Veteran's Day
- \* November 23rd-24th for Thanksgiving
- \* December 25th-26th for Christmas
- \* January 1st for New Years Day

## GET YOUR FLU SHOT!

Austin Public Health is providing multiple flu clinics this September and October. Flu vaccines are available for those 6 months old or older who are uninsured or Medicaid recipients. To find out more, including how to schedule an appointment, call 512-972-5520. For more about the flu, go to our [Immunizations Unit](#) or the [CDC](#).

## Smoking in Public Places

The Smoking in Public Places Ordinance (SIPPO) prohibits smoking in most public places and work places unless listed as an exception in the Smoking Ordinance. Did you know that this ordinance was recently changed?

Effective July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017, electronic smoking devices are prohibited in all locations where smoking is currently prohibited. The Austin City Council updated City Code Chapter 10-6, relating to smoking in public places, on June 22, 2017. Please click on the button below to find the new ordinance language.



[Ordinance Language](#)

To report a violation of this ordinance, please use one of the following methods:

- Call 3-1-1 -or-
- Submit an [online smoking complaint form](http://www.austintexas.gov/smokingcomplaint): <http://www.austintexas.gov/smokingcomplaint>

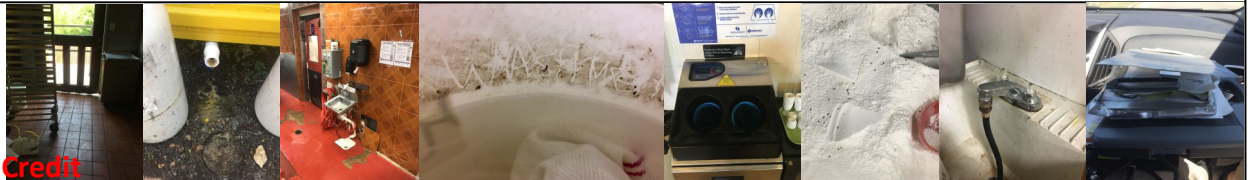
Environmental Health Services Division is responsible for the enforcement of Austin's SIPPO ordinance. Have any questions? Call: 512-978-0300.



We wish you and yours a  
Happy Holiday Season and a peaceful  
and prosperous New Year. May good  
cheer last throughout the entire year.



Michael Bland Photo Credit



# FOODBORNE DISEASE



Foodborne illness (sometimes called “foodborne disease,” “foodborne infection,” or “food poisoning”) is a common, costly—yet preventable—public health problem. Each year, 1 in 6 Americans gets sick by consuming contaminated foods or beverages. Many different disease-causing microbes, or pathogens, can contaminate foods, so there are many different foodborne infections. In addition, poisonous chemicals, or other harmful substances can cause foodborne diseases if they are present in food.

- More than 250 different foodborne diseases have been described. Most of these diseases are infections, caused by a variety of [bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can be foodborne](#).
- Other diseases are poisonings, caused by harmful toxins or chemicals that have contaminated the food, for example, poisonous mushrooms.
- These different diseases have many different symptoms, so there is no one “syndrome” that is foodborne illness. However, the microbe or toxin enters the body through the gastrointestinal tract, and often causes the first symptoms there, so nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps and diarrhea are common symptoms in many foodborne diseases. [Learn more about what you can do to prevent foodborne illness](#).

Public health officials investigate outbreaks to control them, so more people do not get sick in the outbreak, and to learn how to prevent similar outbreaks from happening in the future.

During a multistate foodborne disease outbreak, CDC serves as lead coordinator between public health partners to detect the outbreak, define its size and extent, and to identify the source.

For a more complete list of foodborne germs, see the [Foodborne Illness A-Z Index](#)

## What About Waterborne Disease?

With its many uses for drinking, recreation, sanitation, hygiene, and industry, water is our most precious global resource. Clean and safe drinking water is critical to sustain human life and without it waterborne illness can be a serious problem. Water, which is necessary for recreational water activities like swimming, also helps promote healthy living. Often, water’s vital role is most apparent during an emergency or disaster. The CDC launched the [Healthy Water website](#) to provide answers to your water-related questions.

Have you seen the [“Recreational Water Illness Police”](#) video?

It makes us laugh, but it is still important.



# STAY INFORMED

Sign up to get official emergency alerts in your neighborhood by text, email or phone.

Visit [WarnCentralTexas.org](http://WarnCentralTexas.org) or call (866) 939-0911 and sign up today.



A service of the Capital Area Council of Governments in Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Llano, Travis, and Williamson Counties.

Registering with WarnCentralTexas allows emergency personnel in your local community to directly contact you by phone, text or email during a disaster or public safety event. Using WarnCentralTexas, emergency response teams can warn residents about dangerous conditions and situations as events unfold. They can quickly give specific directions that affect your neighborhood such as evacuation orders and directions to shelters.

The Capital Area Council of Governments has partnered with communities in Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Llano, Travis and Williamson counties to bring residents and visitors WarnCentralTexas, an emergency alert system that can save lives and protect property during disasters.

Residents must register cellphone numbers and email addresses to get alerts sent to their mobile devices, but CAPCOG has already registered landline phones.

Protect your family, property and self. Sign up for emergency warnings in your neighborhood by voice, text, or email.

[Register Here](#)

# FOOD: TOO VALUABLE TO WASTE

Austin's Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO) requires food-permitted businesses to keep organic materials out of local landfills. Ways to comply include:

**REDUCE**  
*batch cook early—cook to order later in the day*

**REUSE**  
*donate to feed the hungry*

**RECYCLE**  
*collect organic material to be composted*

Visit [AustinTexas.Gov/BizOrganics](http://AustinTexas.Gov/BizOrganics) for rebates (up to \$1,800), free assistance and details about Austin's organics ordinance.

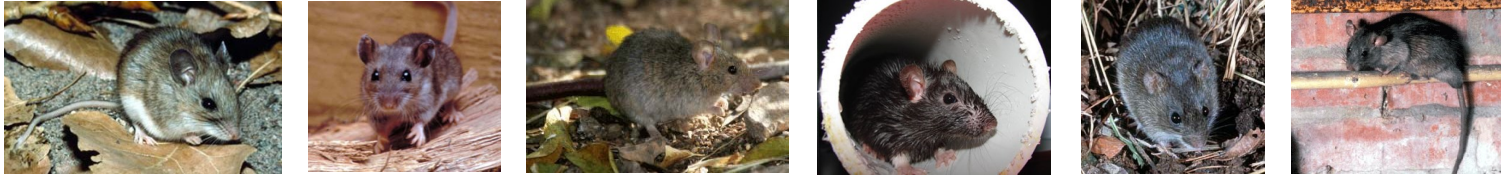
(512) 974-9727 | [CommercialRecycling@AustinTexas.Gov](mailto:CommercialRecycling@AustinTexas.Gov)





Winter is not here yet but it will be here before we know it. Are you ready? When it gets cold outside, rodents look for a place to stay warm. Ideally they want someplace that provides both food and shelter. Now is the time to seal up holes or gaps, trap any existing rodents, and clean up sources of food or water. Mice can squeeze through a hole the size of a nickel and rats can squeeze through a hole the size of a quarter.

Worldwide, rats and mice spread over 35 diseases. These diseases can be spread to humans directly, through handling of rodents, through contact with rodent feces, urine, or saliva, or through rodent bites. Diseases carried by rodents can also be spread to humans indirectly, through ticks, mites, or fleas that have fed on an infected rodent. The primary strategy for preventing human exposure to rodent diseases is effective rodent control. [What to do about Rodents!](#)



### POOL OPERATOR TO DO LIST FOR THE OFF SEASON

It is that time of year for kids of all ages begin to go back to school and work. Pool operators may feel that they get a break too because the pool on their property does not need as much attention after the summer months are over. This is not entirely true, a pool is required to be properly maintained throughout the entire year.

Some items to think about during the off season:



- ✓ Make sure you walk your pool fence enclosure to inspect for any opening greater than 4 inches, such as missing pickets or erosion of the ground beneath the fence
- ✓ Make sure your fence gates self-close and self-latch
- ✓ Make sure your pool chemistry is within proper range and you can see the drains at the bottom
- ✓ Make sure your safety equipment is present and in good condition for future use

Check the [EHSD Pool website](#) for more information.



### ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION CUSTOMER WALK IN HOURS

**Lobby Hours** Rutherford Lane Campus 1520 Rutherford Lane 7:45AM - 3:30PM Monday - Friday  
**One-Stop Shop** 505 Barton Springs Road 8:00AM -12:00PM Monday - Friday  
**Mobile Vending Physical Permitting Inspections** Rutherford Lane Campus  
 1520 Rutherford Lane 7:45 AM - 11:00AM Tuesday and Thursday



EHSD is partnering with Austin 3-1-1 to handle all citizen complaints and environmental investigations. To request services, get general assistance or submit a citizen complaint, dial 3-1-1 or 512-974-2000 if you are calling from outside the Austin service area.

If you feel an inspection issue or complaint investigation has not been satisfactorily addressed, or to speak with a manager regarding administrative issues, please call us directly at 512-978-0300 between the hours of 7:45AM - 4:45PM Monday - Friday.

Mailing Address: EHSD Post Office Box 142529, Austin, TX 78714

Physical Address: Rutherford Lane Campus 1520 Rutherford Lane Building 1 Suite 205 Austin, TX 78754

Email Address: [EHSD.service@austintexas.gov](mailto:EHSD.service@austintexas.gov)

Web Address: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/environmental-health-services>

Feedback: Please complete our online survey to help us better serve our customers: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/EHSDSurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EHSDSurvey)

