

# Fruit compote juice linked to *E. coli* O157 outbreak at festival in Winnipeg

Food handlers should be careful not to contaminate ready-to-eat or drink products.

## What you can do:

- Wash and dry hands using soap, potable water and paper towels prior to handling foods.

- When storing food in coolers or fridges, keep ready-to-consume products covered and above items like raw meat that might drip.



Juices have been linked to outbreaks in the past

- E. coli* O157 contaminated Odwalla brand juices linked to 66 illnesses in 1996
- Salmonella* contaminated Orchid Island Juice Company brands linked to 15 illnesses in 2005
- in 2006, Bolthouse Farms carrot juice was the source of 6 botulism illnesses including a death

## 37 illnesses and 18 hospitalizations linked to outbreak

A fruit juice is the most likely culprit in sickening visitors to a Winnipeg (Canada) festival in August 2010. The majority of illnesses were associated with a Russian combination platter served at Folklorama, an annual heritage celebration. The Russian platter contained borscht (beet soup), meatballs, a rice dish, and the compote juice. The focus narrowed to the juice as ill patrons reported eating both a vegetarian and non-vegetarian dish, with the juice as the only common food.

The compote juice was prepared by adding washed, unpeeled apples, blueberries and

blackberries to boiling water. Once boiled for five to 10 minutes, the juice was decanted into large plastic pails. The juice was then refrigerated until served cold.

### Post-boiling contamination likely

As fruits were washed and boiled as part of the juice-making process it's likely that juice was contaminated either by a staff member or through cross-contamination in the fridge. Health officials believe that ground beef, which was also being handled and prepared at the site, was the most likely source of contamination.

