



# Hardin County Health Services

## Hello from the Inspectors Office



Hope everyone is off to a good start with the new year. I want to introduce you to the Inspectors Office Staff and put pictures with faces so you will have a better idea of who you are talking to on the phone.

Most of you know me, ReJena Bolton, (on the left) I have been here for 5 ½ years serving Hardin County and do so proudly. Sheli Richardson, (middle) is the new Assistant Inspector and she also does Commercial Pools and Foster Parent Homes. Our Administrative Assistant is Meredith Selman (right) and she is who you will be talking to when you call the office. She takes care of the office duties. We are here to answer any questions you may have. Please don't hesitate to call or email us.

**It's time for the Food Establishment Training** to be held Monday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at LISD Performing Arts building. This event is FREE to all food establishments in Hardin County. We will have guest speakers, vendors, door prizes, handouts and food. Registration begins at 8am and conference begins at 8:30. It will end with lunch and door prizes at noon. Please make sure and put this on your calendar! It's a great resource and you get to network with other food establishments in your area. We have attached information with this email.

### Newsletter – Vol. I

January –March 2022

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### Contents:

Meet the staff!

Food Establishment  
Training 2/28/2022

What can I sell from  
home?

FBI Risk Factors

COVID Tips and  
Updates

Could someone on  
your staff use WIC?

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**More information on the Texas Cottage Food Law can be found at <https://texascottagefoodlaw.com/>**

**Full list of food and rules for selling Cottage Foods.**

**Other not allowed foods...**

This list contains **examples** of foods that are not allowed as cottage foods. Just because a food is not explicitly listed here does not mean it is allowed.

Brisket, beef, pork, chicken, fish - any meat product

Hot meals (including "meal prep" type offerings)

Soup, stew, chili or broth (including bone broth)

Tacos and burritos

Pizza

Fresh salads (fruit or vegetable)

Fresh salsa

Potato salad

Macaroni salad

Baked beans

Street corn

Creamed corn

Tres Leches cake

Bread pudding and banana pudding

Jell-O molded salads

Pancakes and crepes

Cheesecake stuffed strawberries

Low-acid fruit butters like pumpkin or banana

Pickled eggs

Raw cookie dough

Bacon (including bacon on cupcakes, candied bacon, and chocolate covered bacon)

Charcuterie boards (meat, cheese, and cut fruits are all not allowed)

## Texas Cottage Food Law

So, You know someone selling food from home...here's a little information you can pass on so they can stay in compliance. Have them visit the website for all their questions and to be in compliance with the law.

For your information purposes; licensed food establishments are not allowed to purchase any food from a cottage food vendor for use in their facility. They also cannot sell any of their items in your establishment. This is against the law and could result in receiving a citation. Please make sure you are reporting anyone selling the non-allowed food items to us. This is a not safe practice and is against the law. You can do this anonymously or however you wish. We appreciate your help with this matter.

### Selling food from home in Texas? Know the law!

If it's not meat, and you can store it in your pantry, there's a good chance you can sell it as a "cottage food".

#### Allowed

- Any food, excluding meat, that does not require refrigeration to keep from spoiling
- Baked goods (cake, cookies, bread, etc)
- Candy
- Whole, uncut fruit dipped in chocolate or candy
- Coated and uncoated nuts
- Fruit butters, jams, and jellies with a pH of 4.6 or less
- Fruit pies and pecan pies
- Popcorn, cereal, granola, trail mix, snack mix
- Canned, acidified salsa with a pH of 4.6 or less
- Pickled fruits and veggies with a pH of 4.6 or less
- Fermented veggies with a pH of 4.6 or less
- Roasted coffee or dry tea
- Dry mixes

#### Not allowed (examples)

- Any item that requires refrigeration to keep from spoiling
- Beef jerky (meat is federally regulated)
- Cheesecake
- Cream pies or meringue pies
- Flan
- Pumpkin pie or custard pie
- Tamales
- Beverages
- Casseroles
- Meat pies
- Kombucha
- Low-acid canned foods like baby food



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**Charcuterie boards (meat, cheese, and cut fruits are all not allowed)**

## FOODBORNE ILLNESS RISK FACTORS:

### Focus on Food from unsafe sources

#### Manager:

The first step you can take to ensure food safety is to make sure that the food arriving at your establishment is coming from a safe source. Make sure that your suppliers are safe and meet all requirements for food safety. Additionally, you should:

- \* Arrange deliveries so they arrive one at a time, during off – peak hours.
- \* Have enough trained staff to promptly receive, inspect, and store deliveries.
- \* Provide thermometers and train employees on how to use them to carefully inspect deliveries
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Read more about Food from Unsafe Sources from the FDA website or DSHS.

<https://www.fda.gov/>

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/>

## FOODBORNE ILLNESS RISK FACTORS;

*These are the top five risk factors contributing to foodborne illness:*

- \*Food from unsafe sources.*
- \*Inadequate cooking.*
- \*Improper hot/cold holding temperatures.*
- \*Contaminated equipment.*
- \*Poor personal hygiene.*



You can't make unsafe food safe. Food that is received from suppliers that are not practicing food safety can cause a foodborne illness outbreak. Purchase food only from an approved, reputable supplier, which has been inspected and meets all applicable local, state, and federal laws. Always follow good receiving procedures.

Checking food when you receive it will help make sure it is safe. Check all shipments when they arrive, before putting them away in storage. Here's what to look for:



\*Cold food should be received at 41°F or lower, and hot food should be received at 135°F or higher.

\*Frozen food should be received frozen. Reject it if you see ice crystals, fluids or water stains.

\* Reject food if it has an abnormal color, or smells wrong or unpleasant.

\* Packaging should be clean and in good condition. Reject food if boxes are broken or cans are swollen or dented.

\* Reject food if there are signs of pests, the use - by date has passed, or if packaging is damp, water - stained, or leaking.

**KNOW THE FACTS AND HOW TO KEEP YOUR ESTABLISHMENT SAFE!**

Covid information:

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/>  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

BOOSTER INFORMATION- FYI

**Who Can Get a Booster Shot?**  
 IF YOU RECEIVED

**Pfizer-BioNTech**

Everyone 12 years and older  
**When to get a booster:**  
 At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series  
**Which booster can you get?**  
 Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most\* situations  
 Teens 12–17 years old may only get a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster

IF YOU RECEIVED

**Moderna**

**Who should get a booster?**  
 Adults 18 years and older  
**When to get a booster:**  
 At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series  
**Which booster can you get?**  
 Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most\* situations

IF YOU RECEIVED

Johnson & Johnson's Janssen\*  
**Who should get a booster?**  
 Adults 18 years and older  
**When to get a booster:**  
 At least 2 months after receiving your J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccination  
**Which booster can you get?**  
 Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most\* situations

**COVID & GENERAL HEALTH TIPS AND UPDATES**

**DEVELOP** mental, physical and emotional strength

**REGULAR** contact with others via tech

7-8 hours of **SLEEP** each night

**EXERCISE** any exercise is good

**MEDITATE** any kind will do

**STAY HYDRATED** add citrus fruit to water

**NUTRITION** for immune support

**VITAMIN D** free from the sun

gutidentity.com

**PROTECT YOURSELF.**  
**Get the COVID-19 vaccine.**

In the near future, a vaccine will be available that is expected to significantly reduce the risk of infection from COVID-19. At first, access will be very limited to health care personnel and first responders, and is expected to become more widely available to the general public in spring 2021. There are many reasons to get the vaccine when it becomes available. The most compelling one is that it could protect you and those around you from this life-threatening virus.

**Four Reasons Why You Should Get the COVID-19 Vaccine:**

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>IT'S SAFE.</b></p> <p>The FDA will only approve vaccines for release under these emergency conditions that have data proving its safety and that meet or exceed minimum efficacy thresholds.</p> | <p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>IT'S EFFECTIVE.</b></p> <p>It's the most effective way to prevent getting COVID-19, and experts believe it may help you from getting seriously ill even if (much like the flu) you do get the virus.</p> | <p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>IT'S FREE!</b></p> <p>Providers must vaccinate persons regardless of their ability to pay. Providers may be able to charge an office visit fee, or administration fee, though this fee can be billed to insurance or Medicare/Medicaid.</p> | <p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>MINIMAL SIDE EFFECTS.</b></p> <p>More than 70,000 people who voluntarily got the vaccine in clinical trials had very low rates of side effects, most common were sore arms at the injection site, some fever or body aches.</p> |
|--|--|---|---|

**Other Important Details About the COVID-19 Vaccine**

- Most of the COVID-19 vaccines use two shots, administered three weeks apart, to provide the best protection.
- The public will not be guinea pigs for the vaccine. The vaccine has been tested on more than 70,000 people who volunteered for large-scale clinical trials already.
- Vaccine manufacturers also asked thousands of people from communities of color including black and Hispanic individuals to participate in their clinical trials.
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19, ask your health care provider if you should be vaccinated.
- You will still need to practice other precautions like wearing a mask, social distancing, handwashing and other hygiene measures until public health officials say otherwise.
- The vaccine may not initially be recommended for use with children or pregnant women. Manufacturers are starting to expand their testing audiences so recommendations allowing use for these groups may be updated at a later date.



For more information on WIC services please contact:

[www.texaswic.org](http://www.texaswic.org)

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/>

## Contact Us

Hardin County Health Services

1135 Redwood / P.O. Box 820

Kountze, Texas 77625

409-246-5188 - Immunizations

409-209-5359 - Inspections

409-246-8383 – WIC

409-246-5189 – Indigent Care

[www.co.hardin.tx.us](http://www.co.hardin.tx.us)

FOOD MANAGER CLASSES

FEBRUARY 22, 2022

9AM-4:30PM. Cost is

\$125 for a 5 year

certificate. Please RSVP at

409-209-5359. If you

have a laptop please bring

it for the test.

Food Manager Classes are

held once a month at the

HC Annex Building. Please

see website for dates and

times.

## WIC and could this benefit your staff?

Who is eligible?

Pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 are eligible. They must meet income guidelines, a state residency requirement, and be individually determined to be at "nutritional risk" by a health professional.

To be eligible on the basis of income, applicants' gross income (i.e., before taxes are withheld) must fall at or below 185 percent of the U.S. Poverty Income Guidelines.

### Income Eligibility Guidelines

(effective 07/01/20 - 06/30/2021)

|                                   | Annually | Monthly   | Weekly |       |       |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-----------|--------|-------|-------|
| Family of 1                       | \$23,606 | \$1,968   | \$454  |       |       |
| Family of 2                       | 31,894   | 2,658     | 614    |       |       |
| Family of 3                       | 40,182   | 3,349     | 773    |       |       |
| Family of 4                       | 48,470   | 4,040     | 933    |       |       |
| Family of 5                       | 56,758   | 4,730     | 1,092  |       |       |
| Family of 6                       | 65,046   | 5,421     | 1,251  |       |       |
| Family of 7                       | 73,334   | 6,112     | 1,411  |       |       |
| Family of 8                       | 81,622   | 6,802     | 1,570  |       |       |
| For each add'l family member, add |          | + \$8,288 |        | + 691 | + 160 |

What food benefits do WIC participants receive?

In most WIC state agencies, WIC participants receive checks or vouchers to purchase specific foods each month that are designed to supplement their diets with specific nutrients that benefit WIC's target population. In addition, some states issue an electronic benefit card to participants instead of paper checks or vouchers. The use of electronic cards is growing and all WIC state agencies are required to implement WIC electronic benefit transfer (EBT) statewide by October 1, 2020. A few state agencies distribute the WIC foods through warehouses or deliver the foods to participants' homes. Different food packages are provided for different categories of participants.

WIC foods include infant cereal, iron-fortified adult cereal, vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, dried and canned beans/peas, and canned fish. Soy-based beverages, tofu, fruits and vegetables, baby foods, whole-wheat bread, and other whole-grain options were recently added to better meet the nutritional needs of WIC participants.

WIC recognizes and promotes breastfeeding as the optimal source of nutrition for infants. For women who do not fully breastfeed, WIC provides iron-fortified infant formula. Special infant formulas and medical foods may be provided when prescribed by a physician for a specified medical condition.

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