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News Column By:
Doris Herringshaw, Ed.D.
Extension Educator,
Family and Consumer Sciences

Fruit and vegetable juices are not usually considered high risk products. Yet juices might be considered high risk if they are raw and not pasteurized. Contamination from bacteria on the outside of the fruit can get into the finished product and grow in the juice.

The most common bacteria is E.coli which can be resilient in acid conditions and survives for long periods of time. Pasteurization is the best method to ensure safe fruit juices and is a process to destroy any bacteria, yeast and mold spores that may be present in raw juices. Approximately, 98% of the juices sold in the United States are pasteurized. However, unpasteurized juices are available at some specialty markets and have led to foodborne illness outbreaks. Several years ago an outbreak of Salmonella infection was linked to inadequate treated orange juice labeled as fresh squeezed.

As a consumer, know what you are purchasing. Look for pasteurization on the container of fruit juice which will indicate high temperature has been used to destroy pathogens. Juices in different forms have been treated to be safe to consume. The production of frozen juice concentrates includes a heat treatment equivalent to pasteurization. "Treated juices" also have been processed to achieve a reduction in bacteria or might use UV irradiation or Ultra high Temperature (UHT) process. UHT treated juices are often packaged in airtight containers such as non-refrigerated boxes, bottles or cans to make them shelf stable. Read the container of juices packaged outside of the United States to make certain they are pasteurized. Price may not be an indication of quality and safety of products.

Unpasteurized apple cider or other fruit juices have been known to cause foodborne illness due to harmful bacteria. Untreated juices are commonly sold refrigerated in specialty stores or farmer's markets. The Food and Drug Administration mandates a warning label stating that juice is not pasteurized and may contain illness causing bacteria.

Children, elderly persons and others with compromised immune systems are most susceptible to foodborne illness. As a consumer read the juice containers and know what you are consuming. Caution before consuming juices can help to avoid any foodborne illness problems.