Ask Yourself...

Where did
the food
come from?

Where do
they wash
their hands?

Is the food
fresh and free
of bugs and
dirt?

Is their house
or car as
clean as
yours?

If you believe you have
gotten sick or would like to
report an illegal vending
business, you can contact
the Illegal Food Program at:

(951) 358-5172

Or on the web at

www.rivcoeh.org

All complaints are
handled confidentially.

Thank You!

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE • COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY
DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

Illegal
Food

What’s
the Problem?
Eating is an enjoyable part of life. But we must be aware of the dangers of buying food or drinks that have not been handled in a sanitary manner. Food that has been mishandled can lead to illness and in some cases death.

When bad food is eaten you can become sick within a few minutes or, in most cases, it can take several days. Food poisoning feels like a very bad flu (vomiting, cramps, diarrhea, fever, etc). Young children, elderly people, pregnant women, and people with an illness are most at risk.

There are many factors that can make food bad. Food can become contaminated during preparation when poorly trained cooks do not use sanitary practices while preparing it; or it can be obtained from warehouses and kitchens that have not been monitored for cleanliness and protection from vermin and toxic materials.

You must be aware of who is selling you food. Will it be safe? Don't take risks! Stay well!

One of the biggest challenges in managing food safety is dealing with illegal food vendors. The illegal food vendor can be a roadside fruit vendor or a corn or shaved ice vendor. The vendor may be operating a corner taco stand, or an illegal restaurant at a house.

Food from an illegal vendor can be risky because hygienic practices and sources of food are not monitored. They do not always clean their equipment correctly, wear clean clothes or wash their hands.

Have you ever wondered where a street-side vendor uses the bathroom and washes his or her hands before they handle your food?

Legal food operations are held to California Health and Safety Code standards on how to handle and protect food. Anyone preparing food that will be sold to the public must pass a test on safe food handling.

You can find legal vending operations at fairs, in front of stores and offices and at swap meets and sports activities. They are the packaged food trucks and carts: the hot dog, shaved ice, churro or coffee carts. These operations are licensed by the County of Riverside Department of Environmental Health and must meet State standards for sanitary practices so that they may legally sell food to the public.

It is illegal to sell any food or drink to a retail consumer in Riverside County unless the vendor is permitted by the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health. Sanitary practices and approved food sources are enforced in order for a vendor to be permitted.

For all legal carts and trucks a permit decal like the one shown will be displayed on one side of the vehicle.

Choose carefully!
◊ **ONLY BUY FOOD FROM LEGAL FOOD VENDORS**.
◊ **LOOK FOR THE PERMIT DECAL!**