

Penn Manor Food Services

I will periodically send out newsletters providing basic information including program history and data with regard to Penn Manor Food Services. The information is being provided so all parents, students and staff have a greater understanding of the complex and extensive regulatory atmosphere under which the cafeteria operates.

IRRADIATION OF RAW MEAT AND POULTRY

As part of its mission of preventing illness from the food we eat, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) oversees the irradiation of raw meat and poultry. Irradiation can increase the safety of the food supply and help protect consumers from food borne illness. However, this process is not a substitute for good sanitation and safe food handling from the farm to the table.

Penn Manor has made no commitments to purchasing irradiated food. Precooked hamburgers and meatballs are examples of food purchases to prevent contamination by E. coli, listeria and other dangerous bacteria. Cafeteria employees are trained in food preparation, storage and sanitation to prevent contamination.

Here is some basic information about this process.

1. **What is food irradiation?** Food radiation is a process in which products are exposed to radiant energy including gamma rays, electron beams, and x-rays in amounts approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
2. **Why is food irradiated?** Food is irradiated to make it safer. It can reduce the risk of food borne illness by destroying harmful bacteria, parasites, insects, and fungi. It also reduces spoilage. Like freezing, canning, and drying, irradiation can also extend the shelf life of perishable food products. For example, irradiated strawberries stay unspoiled in the refrigerator up to 3 weeks versus 3 to 5 days for untreated berries.
3. **Is irradiated food safe to eat?** Yes, irradiated food is safe to eat. The FDA has evaluated the safety of irradiation over the last 50 years and found it to be safe. Food irradiation has been approved in 37 countries for more than 40 food products
4. **Will irradiated meat and poultry cost more?** Yes, the estimate is \$.05 to \$.10 more per pound.
5. **What are other uses of irradiation in the United States?** U.S. food regulations also allow the irradiation of wheat and wheat powder, white potatoes, 38 spices and dry vegetables seasonings, and fresh fruits

More information can be obtained at the web site: www.fsis.usda.gov.