

Food Code Fact Sheet #23

What you should know about the Code

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Pickling and Fermentation in Food Service Facilities

There are three processes commonly used to make pickled products in food service facilities: hot brined product, cold brined product and natural fermentation. All three processes are allowed without additional regulation in the Food Sanitation Rules as long as the options below are followed. Some examples of products that would be included are; traditional cucumber pickles, dilly beans, bread and butter pickles and kim-chee. Be sure to contact your Local Public Health Authority prior to beginning any type of processing in your facility.

Option #1: Cold Brine

Raw, non-potentially hazardous (non-PHF) veggies that are covered with a cool brine are allowed to be held for use indefinitely without refrigeration or datemarking because there is no heat treatment of the vegetables.

Option #2: Hot Brine

Vegetables treated with a hot brine are considered to be potentially hazardous foods (PHFs). But this can be done under the Food Sanitation Rules by cooling the food properly and storing them below 41F with a 7-day date-mark.

Many restaurants have taken this opportunity to make smaller batches in order to try different recipes and have more varieties of seasonal flavors available.

Option #3: Natural fermentation is the process where **raw vegetables** (including cabbage) undergo natural lactic acid fermentation at room temperature.

No meat or fish products may be used for this option. These products are not subject to refrigeration or date-marking requirements, because the pH of these products is known to inhibit bacterial growth. It is recommended that the facility use a pH meter or pH test strips onsite with a tracking log to ensure the fermentation process was successfully completed.

If you choose to go outside these parameters set in the rules, then a variance is required. For example, any hermetic sealing or canning of a pickled product requires a variance in Oregon and may also fall under the national Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) as an acidified food.

If the product is determined to be an acidified food, the operator needs to successfully complete

Better Process Control School and schedule their process with the FDA in accordance with 21 CFR 114.

Other fermented products such as yogurt, milk kefir, tempeh and meat products are only allowed with an approved variance.



'Refrigerator' pickles are quick and easy to make

Visit our [variance](http://www.healthoregon.org/FoodSafety/Pages/variance.aspx) webpage at www.healthoregon.org/FoodSafety/Pages/variance.aspx for more information on how to apply for a variance from the Food Sanitation rules.

Using a licensed co-packer to make and package your product is quick and easy way to get your product ready for retail sale.