



An important Public Health Evaluation is underway under the guidance of the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center. The Public Health Evaluation is designed to evaluate the potential short and long-term health risks associated with living in the Naples area as a result of inadequate trash collection, uncontrolled open burning of uncollected trash, and widespread dumping of waste, including chemical and other hazardous waste.

Launched in 2008, the Public Health Evaluation involves the collection of air, water, soil and soil gas samples from throughout the region to identify whether there are potential health risks.

For details and background information, visit the website listed at the bottom of this page.

Your Health: Facts for Navy Families in Naples

About: Food On and Off-Base

The U.S. Navy is committed to ensuring our families are safe while serving our country at home or overseas. The following information is provided as part of a wide-ranging effort to understand the health risks of our personnel and families living in Naples, Italy. Currently underway is a comprehensive Public Health Evaluation to assess potential short and long-term health risks associated with living in the Naples area (see sidebar). In line with our commitment to continually share important health information, we encourage you to review the following information.

Are there health concerns about food in Naples?

Numerous reports of high dioxin levels and other chemicals in soil have created a concern that foods may be contaminated. Articles in newspapers and in some Italian scientific journals allege links between adverse health effects and the toxic waste dumps in the Campania region. These articles implicate locally grown vegetables, fruits and Mozzarella di Bufala as possibly contaminated foods.

Is the Navy taking any action?

Yes. As part of the Navy's overall efforts to be protective of the health of U.S. military and civilian personnel and their families in Naples, the Navy and U.S. Army Veterinary Command (VETCOM) conducted an investigation of foods produced in the Campania region and sold in the commissary.

VETCOM is the Department of Defense (DOD) executive agent for food safety and quality assurance (DOD Directive 6400.4, 22 Aug 03) and is responsible for providing direct assistance to all DOD agencies requiring support with respect to food safety and food defense as it applies to the approved sources of food procurement within the DOD. It performs sanitation and food defense audits at commercial establishments approved to provide food items to U.S. military installations, such as commissaries; Navy Exchange Marts (NEX-Marts); Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) food sites; Department of Defense Dependents Schools; Child Development Center/youth services; espresso bars; hospital galleys; and Carney Park food establishments.

Is food monitored on an ongoing basis?

Yes, there are multiple layers of protection U.S. military and civilian personnel and their families receive when purchasing food items on base.

- U.S. Naval Hospital Naples Preventive Medicine routinely inspects all dining

facilities on base to ensure that food is properly stored, maintained and prepared. In addition, it ensures that food service workers are trained in food safety.

- VETCOM ensures the following within the Navy's commissaries:
 - All foods are from VETCOM-approved sources.
 - Proper facility sanitation.
 - Personal hygiene practices of food service workers.
 - Education of food service managers and employees about food safety.

What about the safety of products from other countries?

Food in the commissary falls into two main categories: (1) approved sources and (2) exempt items. Approved sources are food manufacturing establishments that have either been inspected by VETCOM or U.S. governmental agencies like the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Food and Drug Administration. VETCOM inspectors are also stationed in the commissary and consistently monitor food products as they are received. The inspectors review contracts, inspect items placed for sale in the store and work with the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) Manager and U.S. Naval Hospital Naples Preventive Medicine group. DeCA, headquartered in Fort Lee, Virginia, operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment.

Approved Sources

Buying from approved sources is required for all meat, dairy, eggs, prepared vegetables and bottled water. These items are purchased from the following areas:

- **Beef:** Imported from the United States and prepared at a DeCA facility in Germany.



For more information contact:

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- **Pork:** Purchased from approved plants in Germany and prepared at a DeCA facility in Germany.
- **Chicken:** Purchased from an Arena Group factory in Bojano, Italy. This facility is regularly inspected by VETCOM.
- **Dairy products (cheeses, yogurts, cream cheese) and eggs:** Either imported from the United States or purchased from Arla Foods in Denmark.
- **Liquid dairy (milk, buttermilk, soy milk):** Imported from the United States except for "Armed Forces Europe" milk, which comes from Austria.
- **Mozzarella di Bufala:** Produced by Lat-Bri located in northern Italy; the milk used to process the mozzarella is from Germany.
- **Bottled water:** Comes from a number of approved-source facilities throughout Italy. The "Culligan" brand is produced by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service in Germany. The "San Benedetto" brand is produced in the Veneto region and is inspected and approved by VETCOM.

Exempt Sources

Numerous unprocessed vegetables are locally grown within the Campania region. Unprocessed fruits and vegetables are foods that are raw and have not been chemically or thermally altered. These types of fruits and vegetables are exempt from inspection by VETCOM per Directory of Sanitary Approved Food Establishments for Armed Forces Procurement (VETCOM Circular 40-1, Appendix A, Section 2). The exemption allows the commissary and other food service establishments to purchase nonprocessed (not cut, chopped, peeled or canned) fruits and vegetables from local producers without prior approval from VETCOM. It is important to understand that this does not mean the product is unsafe for consumption.

A good sanitary practice wherever you are is that all fresh fruits and vegetables be thoroughly washed with potable water prior to eating or cooking. Immune-compromised people should consume only cooked fruits and vegetables. These food safety guidelines apply no matter where you live in the world.

Does the Navy inspect food off-base?

No, the U.S. Government does not inspect restaurants or supermarkets off-base. Italy has a system in place to inspect Italian food facilities, markets and suppliers. However, VETCOM

does inspect Italian food manufacturing facilities producing food that is supplied to U.S. military installations, such as the commissary, NEX-Marts and MWR facilities.

What is Italy's inspection process?

Italian laws are guided by European Union Directives, which mandate various aspects of food safety. Levels of authority and responsibilities are similar to that in the United States. Italy's food safety requirements include inspecting catering operators every six months, inspecting supermarkets every nine months and inspecting restaurants and retail shops annually. In addition, food businesses must have a documented Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point system in place. This is a systematic approach to food safety. All food service employees must have an individual health certificate issued annually by the local health authority in lieu of food safety training.

What has the Navy learned during the food study?

The Navy and VETCOM have determined that all bacteriological, metals and chemical results in the food products tested during the food study were within allowable limits, thus all foods were considered safe to consume.

As part of the food study, the Navy and VETCOM evaluated the following:

- Products available for sale at the Support Site Commissary in Gricignano.
- Products produced within the Campania region.
- Plant products that were root plants or grown close to the soil that had the potential for plant uptake of contaminants through the plant's root system.

Products meeting the above criteria include:

- | | | |
|----------|------------|-------------|
| •Carrots | •Mushrooms | •Chicken |
| •Celery | •Cabbage | •Artichokes |
| •Spinach | | |

Where can I get more information about the food study?

The food study report is currently being finalized. When the food study report is complete, the Navy will notify All Hands via e-mail and the Panorama. The report will also be posted on the Naples Community Health Awareness website, listed at the bottom of this page.