

How can I be sure that the ground beef I buy is safe?

BPI's lean beef is a component in ground beef produced by most prominent ground beef producers. The amount of BPI's lean beef used in the ground beef will vary depending upon the company making the finished ground beef and the lean content of the ground beef (typically, the leaner the ground beef, the more BPI lean beef). One thing that doesn't change is BPI's commitment to food safety associated with everything we produce. Producers buying BPI lean beef are assured of using the safest meats available in their ground beef.

Food safety is Job 1 at BPI. All of our beef trimmings come from inspected, approved processing plants and our state of the art facilities monitor the process at every stage of production. Our sanitary systems exceed the standards established by safety experts – we even wash and sanitize the air that comes into our plant to prevent any air-borne contaminants from entering the system. All of our products are continuously sampled and sent to an outside laboratory where they are tested as part of BPI's rigorous food safety program. This testing becomes one of the tools used to continuously monitor BPI's operations to ensure the consistent quality of our lean beef. We're so committed to food safety that when we built our plant in South Sioux City, nearly 20% of the costs were dedicated to food safety and sanitary systems.

How does e coli get into meat?

E.coli bacteria are naturally occurring in the environment and we are exposed to them in a variety of ways each day. All animals and humans have e.coli in the digestive tracts of their bodies. E.coli can also be found in unpasteurized milk and apple cider, raw vegetables and other types of food. On rare occasions, harmful forms of e.coli, such as *E.coli O157:H7*, can get into meat as it is being processed. BPI leads the industry and has been recognized by the USDA, consumer safety groups, and food protection organizations for our outstanding efforts to advance food safety. We employ the most rigorous finished product sampling and testing program in the industry to check for the presence of *E.coli O157:H7*. BPI's products are certified as testing negative for that pathogen prior to ever being shipped to our customers.

What is ammonium hydroxide?

Ammonium hydroxide is the combination of ammonia and water. It is naturally present in all proteins. Ammonia is essential for life and we have included information about its uses and benefits for your convenience.^{link} Those benefits and uses vary significantly based upon its strength or concentration.

Does ammonium hydroxide occur naturally in beef?

Yes. Due to its antimicrobial benefits, BPI increases the naturally occurring levels of ammonium hydroxide a slight amount in order to assist in eliminating any harmful bacteria that could potentially be present in meats.

What is the difference between ammonia and ammonium hydroxide?

Ammonium hydroxide is the combination of ammonia and water. They each occur naturally in all foods.

Is ammonia or ammonium hydroxide used in any other foods?

Yes. It's quite common to find foods processed using ammonia or ammonium hydroxide. It is used in production of other foods like grains, baked goods, condiments, pancakes, chocolates, caramels, puddings, cheeses.

Someone told me that there is ammonia in our bodies. Is that true?

Yes, your body naturally produces about 4,200 milligrams of ammonia every day and it is essential for life. We have included information about its uses and benefits for your convenience.

It sounds like ammonia. Why is it put in my meat?

Due to its antimicrobial benefits, BPI increases the naturally occurring levels of ammonium hydroxide a slight amount in order to assist in eliminating any harmful bacteria that could potentially be present in meats. BPI's use of ammonium hydroxide has been approved by the Food & Drug Administration, United States Department of Agriculture and was implemented only after review with several of the most prominent consumer safety groups in the United States. Ammonia in its various forms is useful for a wide variety of food processing purposes, including a leavening agent in baking, caramel production, drinking water, and as an antibacterial agent.

Is this the only way you can get rid of e coli?

No, although we believe it is the most effective way to ensure fresh meats are free of harmful bacteria prior to cooking. For additional substances determined suitable for addition to foods, see USDA Directive 7,120.1^{link}

Consumers play an important role in reducing their risk from such bacteria by always following safe food handling practices and properly cooking foods. By combining our efforts with those of other conscientious producers and consumers, we strive to ensure the availability of safe, and nutritious foods.

What about other contaminants I've heard about – listeria, salmonella, etc.? Can ammonium hydroxide help kill them?

Yes it can. Our food safety efforts are specifically targeted at and most effective with gram negative bacteria like *E.coli O157:H7* and Salmonella. We continue our research and development efforts and have had significant success in reducing exposure to gram positive bacteria like Listeria. BPI leads the industry and has been recognized by the USDA, consumer safety groups, and food protection organizations for our outstanding efforts to advance food safety. BPI employs the most rigorous finished product sampling and testing program in the industry.

We are all told to be more “green.” I want my food to be “natural.” Is this just another chemical in my food?

Ammonia and ammonium hydroxide are naturally occurring in all proteins. Ammonia is essential for life and we have included information about its uses and benefits for your convenience.