

N.S. donairs: They induce babies, upset tummies and make us homesick

By **CHRIS LAMBIE**
Staff Reporter

Donairs: Some of you love them and others can't even stand the smell.

Readers responded in droves after The Chronicle Herald revealed Wednesday that a federal-provincial-territorial donair working group is looking at what dangers may lurk within the spicy, sweet concoctions wrapped in a pita with tomatoes and onions. By e-mail and in submissions to thechronicleherald.ca, friends and foes weighed in.

Margaret Rao of Dartmouth remembers her favourite donair experience well.

"I was two weeks overdue with my first child and had to be induced (not the most pleasant of experiences) starting at 9 that morning," she wrote in an e-mail.

"The treatments weren't as effective as hoped so I was sent home again and again and by 7 p.m. I was hungry, tired, hot, cranky and in need of some serious comfort food. The only thing that would do was a donair pogo from Bash Toulany's. Within a half-hour of eating the

donair pogo, I had my first contraction and my son was born the next morning.

"To this day I tell Bash that his donair pogo is what put me into labour."

Government regulators are delving into donairs because they've been linked to three outbreaks of E. coli 0157:H7 in Alberta since 2004. They are expected to release recommendations early next year on donair preparation.

Kimberley Sampson of Dartmouth blames one bad batch for putting her off donairs for good.

"A few hours after eating the donairs, (my husband and I) both became deathly sick," she writes.

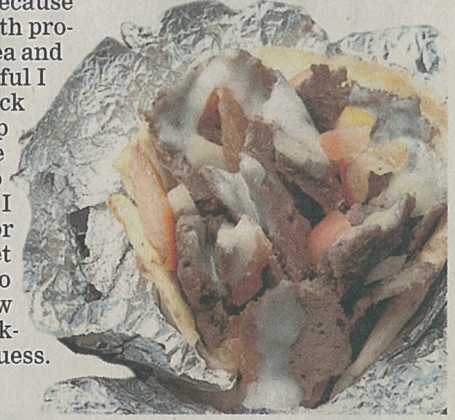
"We had never thrown up and been so weak in our lives. . . . We were sick for two days, too weak to even go to the hospital. We have never eaten a donair again, and the thought of one sickens me. But, until that time, we loved our donairs."

While buying a house in Dartmouth nearly a decade ago, Robin Banfield and his wife ate donairs they remember for all the wrong reasons.

"The next day during the

house inspection I had to go back to the apartment because I became violently ill with projectile vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramps so painful I wanted to die. I went back to the house to pick up my wife and from there she drove me right to Dartmouth General. I had to stay overnight for observation and get fluids through an IV. To this day, I don't know what caused that sickness, but I have a good guess.

See **DONAIRS / B7**



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Donairs

continued from / B1

I've had the flu before, and that definitely wasn't the flu. . . . Despite that, I still enjoy a good donair today."

Mary-Anne Lively of Halifax has mixed emotions when it comes to donairs.

"I love donairs . . . but can't eat them," she writes. "I've probably eaten four in my life, and I feel gastronomically ill every time I eat one! They are the only food that makes me ill every time. Too bad . . . they taste soooo good."

Stephan LaPierre of Eastern Passage said he's been eating donairs since moving here nearly 20 years ago.

"Besides being hard on the arteries, donairs are a great

thing. I have eaten hundreds of them over the years and have never been sick," Mr. LaPierre writes. "I am a bit surprised to hear that there is a donair working group (seems as much a waste of time as the cat registry)."

Lots of people seem to be longing for Nova Scotia donairs from afar.

"Having lived in the U.S. for almost 10 years, I can honestly say that besides great seafood,

Keith's beer and the McIntosh apples, donairs are one of the things I miss about home," writes Elizabeth Bignell, who lives in South Carolina.

"I never miss having a donair when I am home. The first was eaten at the West End Mall many, many years ago, when the food court was down near the Bay, and Sears was still there. Many a lunch hour was spent wiping donair sauce from my chin. I can't wait to get

home and indulge again."

A Toronto police officer said regulators should leave donair makers alone.

"Hey, if it isn't broke don't fix it," writes Det. Const. Diane Villeneuve.

Raised in the north end of Halifax, she said Toulany's is the first place she visits on a trip back home. "I have never felt bad afterwards, other than stuffed."

Melissa Richards moved

from Nova Scotia to Alberta this past June.

"All I want on a daily basis is a good old Nova Scotia donair," she writes from Lethbridge.

"Out here, they have 'donairs,' but they have lettuce, and tzatziki sauce on it, if you're lucky. Otherwise it's ranch dressing. And the meat . . . is so bland . . . it's like eating bologna. It makes my tongue cry."

(clambie@herald.ca)