

Safe Food Handling

Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

Foodborne Illness

Foodborne illness (illness carried by food) happens when food becomes contaminated.

Contamination

1. Chemical: a poison—sanitizer, soap, bug killer, lighter fluid, or similar material.
2. Physical: things that fall into the food—dirt, jewelry, hair, insects, pieces of metal, etc.
3. Biological: mold, fungus, parasites, or germs (microorganisms: viruses or bacteria).

Time Temperature Control for Safety Food

Milk or milk products, beef, poultry, fish, shell eggs and egg products, pork, lamb, shellfish, cooked vegetables, soy protein foods, sprouts, cut melons, cooked rice, and garlic in oil. These foods support the rapid growth of microorganisms if kept in the Temperature Danger Zone (41° F - 135° F).

Food Handler's Challenge

1. Keep cold foods below 41° F.
2. Keep hot foods above 135° F.
3. Take food temperatures every two hours to prevent extended time in the danger zone.
4. Minimize bare hand contact with ready-to-eat (RTE) foods: use utensils, tissues, or gloves.
5. Wash hands using warm water and soap; rub hands together for at least 20 seconds when washing hands. Perform a double hand wash (warm water, soap, and scrubbing twice before drying).
6. Wash hands (*see #5*) after eating, drinking, smoking, using the restroom, or handling dirty utensils, garbage, raw foods, touching yourself, and sneezing or coughing. *Recommendation:* wash hands or use a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved hand disinfectant after handling money or the phone.
7. If you have vomiting or diarrhea or fever stay home.
8. Cuts and sores should be bandaged and covered with a waterproof glove or wrap (finger cot).

Sanitation

1. Follow label directions for use of all chemicals.
2. All chemical containers shall be correctly labeled and only used for the named chemical.
3. Store wiping cloths in sanitizing solution between uses.
4. Wash, rinse, sanitize, then air dry utensils and food containers (including plates, glasses, etc.).
5. *Heat sanitizing* dish machine: a final rinse that sanitizes with water at 180° F or hotter.
6. *Chemical sanitizing* dish machine: follow label directions for use of sanitizer, set the temperature between 120° F and 140° F, and use the correct test strip.
7. *Manually* cleaning dishware: detergent and water (110° F or hotter), clear rinse water (110° F or hotter), and sanitizing solution at the proper temperature and concentration, according to label directions, for 30 seconds *or* use hot water at 171° F for 30 seconds.
8. After sanitizing manually or automatically, all items must air dry before storage.
9. The three most common chemicals used for sanitizing are Chlorine, Quaternary Ammonium, and Iodine. Mix according to label directions.
10. Use test paper to test the concentration of chemical sanitizer.
11. Check water temperature and chemical strength often.

Receiving Food

1. Check temperatures and quality. Reject if time temperature control for safety food is above 41° F or packaged food is above 70° F. Reject if moldy, spoiled, or shows signs of insect or rodent damage or infestation. Reject if the can is dented or missing the label or if the sack or box is torn.
2. Handle food quickly during delivery. Store right away

Storing Food

1. Maintain consistent proper temperatures in coolers (41° F or below) and freezers (0° F or below).
2. Rotate stock—use FIFO. (First in - first out)
3. Use proper containers for storage with tight-fitting lids.
4. Label all containers with contents and date.
5. Store foods and food containers 6 inches above the floor.

Cold Food Storage

1. Cover, date, and label.
2. Place all cooked food above raw food in the refrigerator.
3. Refrigerated, ready to eat, time-temperature control for safety food prepared and held for 24 hours or more, shall be marked with the date of preparation and consumed within 7 days if stored at 41° F or less, or within 4 days if stored at 42° F to 45° F.
4. Commercially processed food shall be marked to indicate the date on which the container was opened.
5. Use or discard within 4 days if stored at 42° F to 45° F or within 7 days if stored at 41° F or below. Such foods shall be consumed by the manufacturer's use-by date.

Pre-Prep

1. Wash hands and all food utensils before and after handling food.
2. Do not re-use utensils that have come into contact with time temperature control for safety foods without washing and sanitizing them.
3. Use proper thawing practices: in a refrigerator, in a microwave, completely submerged under 70° F (or cooler) *running* water, or thaw during cooking.
4. Limit the time food is in the temperature danger zone, between 41° F and 135° F. Work only with the amount you can prepare in a short period.

Cooking Temperatures (all temperatures are minimum *internal (thermal center)* temperatures and should be held for 15 seconds or longer)

1. At least 165° F (73.9° C): Poultry, stuffed fish, stuffed meat, stuffed pasta, or stuffing containing meat.
2. At least 155° F (68° C): Ground beef or pork, comminuted fish or meats, injected meats, sausage, or eggs that are not immediately served.
3. At least 145° F (63° C): Eggs cooked to order, fish and steak. Whole beef roasts, corned beef roasts, pork roasts, and cured pork roasts such as ham.

When cooking in a microwave bring the food to 165° F for 15 seconds. Cover container, rotate and stir midway through the cooking cycle. When finished, verify temperatures and allow the food to stand 2 minutes before serving.

Reheating Foods

1. When hot holding, reheat food to 165° F (73.9° C) or higher for 15 seconds within two hours if it has dropped below 135° F. (Discard the food if held below 135° F for four hours or more.)
2. *Recommendation:* only reheat food once.
3. Never use holding equipment (such as a steam table) to reheat food.
4. Do not mix raw food into cooked food, or new into old.

Cooling

Cool foods from 135° F to 70° F or lower within two hours or less. Then cool to 41° F within an additional 4 hours or less. Use one or more of the following cooling methods:

1. Cut large pieces of meat into smaller pieces.
2. Use an ice water bath or a blast chiller to cool food rapidly.
3. Shallow pans speed up the cooling process. Pour thick food, such as chili, to no more than two inches deep. Pour thin food, such as chicken broth, no more than three inches deep.