



## Food Safety and Hygiene

Each year millions of people worldwide suffer from food poisoning at enormous cost to their communities. **Even food that looks tastes and smells good can make you sick!**

Food poisoning is caused by bacteria, natural toxins and chemicals. The most common cause is bacteria. Foodborne illness occurs when food poisoning bacteria contaminate food and multiply to dangerous levels, due to poor food handling and storage. In order to multiply to these levels, bacteria need food, warmth, moisture and time.

There are two types of bacteria: those that spoil food and those that cause food poisoning. Some people wrongly believe food poisoning bacteria will make food smell, taste and look bad. Harmless Microbes can cause food to smell off, taste bad and look terrible – and still not make us ill. Food poisoning bacteria, however, is quite different. Bacteria love to breed in the following foods, which are also referred to as high risk foods. High risk foods are likely to cause food poisoning if not stored, Prepared or cooked properly. High risk foods include:

- meat and poultry – bacteria such as Salmonella and E. Coli occur naturally in raw meat and poultry so ensure meats are thoroughly cooked to kill bacteria.
- gravy and stews – bacteria such as Clostridium perfringens, are a food poisoning bacteria commonly associated with these foods. Gravies prepared and cooled in large batches provide a perfect, warm environment for growth, and increase the risk of food poisoning. Divide into smaller batches to cool faster.
- milk, cream and egg products – the use of raw eggs and unpasteurised milk products, which may contain bacteria such as Salmonella, can cause food poisoning. Use only clean and uncracked eggs and pasteurised milk products.
- seafood – much of the seafood we eat is raw and not cooked before eating, so ensure seafood is stored at the right temperature to prevent food poisoning.

### Ten common contributors to food poisoning:

- inadequate refrigeration – store high risk food at 5°C or less.
- food stored at room temperature – minimise the time high risk food is stored at room temperature (a maximum of 4 hours).
- food prepared too far in advance – can increase the likelihood of contamination and time in the 'danger zone'.
- inadequate cooling – cool food quickly in small batches.
- inadequate re-heating – heat food quickly to over 60°C to destroy bacteria.
- inadequate thawing – ensure raw meat such as poultry is thawed thoroughly so the cooking process heats the internal temperature to over 60°C, destroying bacteria naturally present.
- poor housekeeping – clean premises reduce the number of bacteria that can be transferred during food preparation.
- cross contamination – staff with good food handling practices will reduce the likelihood of cross contamination.
- contaminated processed food – use reputable suppliers to ensure you receive good quality food.
- poor personal hygiene – ensure staff know and practice good personal hygiene habits.

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Food premises must be continually cleaned to ensure all surfaces and equipment that come in contact with food do not contain food poisoning bacteria. Cleaning and sanitising cooking utensils, tableware and equipment used to prepare food, is essential for the safe operation of any food business.

### **Three basic steps to effective cleaning**

1. Clean with a detergent and hot water. Cleaning only removes the dirt from the surface but does not kill all the bacteria.
2. As dirt inhibits the effectiveness of a sanitiser, only sanitise on a cleaned surface. Sanitisers need contact time to work, so items such as utensils should be left to soak.
3. Drip dry tableware and utensils. This will prevent them from becoming recontaminated by wiping with a dirty cloth or tea towel.

### **What is the difference between cleaning and sanitising?**

Cleaning is the removal of visible dirt, grease and other material whereas sanitising is the use of heat or chemicals to reduce bacteria. Neither method removes or kills all bacteria.

### **A cleaning schedule**

All premises need a cleaning schedule to ensure all areas are kept clean and sanitised. Work surfaces Such as food preparation benches and equipment are more prone to contamination, and require more attention.

### **Creating the schedule**

- Walk through your premises and make a list of all the items that need cleaning. Start with items like the structure (floor, walls and ceilings), equipment, fittings, and fixtures.
- Beside each item listed to clean, write down the cleaning product and cleaning method. Fill in details on how often it should be cleaned (i.e. daily, weekly). Also write down the person responsible for making sure the task is completed and the date to be completed by.

### **Implementing the schedule**

- Laminate the chart and use a water-based marker to tick the completed column when the task is done
- Ensure staff know how the schedule works and the role they should play
- Ensure staff carry out regular checks on their areas
- Place the schedule on the wall so it can be easily seen by all staff
- Review the schedule regularly and check that all tasks are completed.

### **General cleaning rules**

- Clean up all spills straight away.
- Clean and sanitise all cutting boards and preparation benches after each use. This is particularly important when changing from preparing raw to cooked foods.
- Each day, clean and sanitise areas and appliances directly involved with food preparation.
- Schedule areas, such as shelving and exhaust canopies, for cleaning and sanitising on a weekly basis. Exhaust canopy filters can be cleaned by external contractors.
- Store cleaning products away from food.
- Use different cloths for cleaning different types of food areas and equipment i.e. one cloth may be used for the waste area and another for the handwashing basin.
- Soak cleaning cloths in sanitiser on a daily basis

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