

FOOD SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH

SEPTEMBER 2020



Food Safety should be a top priority for all retail food service establishments, at home and in addition to local churches and non-profit groups that are preparing meals for all that have been affected by natural disasters or national outbreaks.

– Hand washing, also known as hand hygiene, is the act of cleaning one's hands with soap and water to remove viruses/bacteria/microorganisms, dirt, grease, or other harmful and unwanted substances stuck to the hands. Wash your hands often and every time you:

1. Go to the restroom
2. Touch your face, hair or phone
3. Take out the trash
4. Put on or take off your gloves
5. Eat, drink or use tobacco





– Hot foods should be held at 140° F or higher, use a food thermometer to check. When serving or keeping foods hot, try using chafing dishes, slow cookers, or warming trays.

– Cold foods should be held at 40° F or below, by placing them in containers with ice. The FDA Food Code requires that all cold foods be maintained at 41° F or below. When temperatures of food are above 41° F, they are in the temperature danger zone—temperatures at which bacteria grow rapidly. Research has shown that inadequate cold holding temperatures are a problem in many foodservice operations.

– Reheat food to 165° F before serving. Food made in-house and reheated for hot holding must reach an internal temperature of at least 165° F for 15 seconds. Food made in a food processing plant, opened in the food establishment, and reheated for hot holding must reach a temperature of 135° F. Reheat food rapidly, within two hours.

– Keep food out of the “Danger Zone” (40°-140° F). Never leave food out of refrigeration over 2 hours. If the outside temperature is above 90° F, food should not be left out more than 1 hour.

– Storing leftovers, one of the most common causes of foodborne illness is improper cooling of cooked foods. Bacteria can be reintroduced to food after it is safely cooked. For this reason, leftovers must be put in shallow containers for quick cooling and refrigerated at 40° F or below within two hours.

– Check food temperatures with a calibrated thermometer often. Why

U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION
Food Safe Shopping & Storage
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Following these tips when buying and storing food can help prevent foodborne illness

DO	DON'T
Keep produce separate from meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs in shopping carts and bags	Choose meat, poultry, or seafood in damaged or leaking packaging
Place meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs in plastic bags at checkout	Buy eggs with cracked shells or damaged cartons
Keep produce and other ready-to-eat foods in a separate area of the refrigerator from meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs	Remove eggs from carton or keep them in the refrigerator door
Refrigerate food within 2 hours of grocery shopping, or 1 hour if kept in air temperatures above 90 °F	Place raw meat, poultry, or seafood on upper shelves of the refrigerator where they can drip onto other foods
Set refrigerator temperature to 40 °F or below and freezer at 0 °F or below (as indicated by an appliance thermometer)	Overfill the refrigerator or freezer
Defrost food in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave – and cook immediately	Thaw meat, poultry, or seafood on the counter

is it necessary to calibrate a thermometer? It is necessary to calibrate a thermometer to assure accurate readings, as the accuracy of a thermometer can drift over time.

– Never keep food over seven (7) days once it has been thawed or opened. The FDA says you should typically only keep leftovers in the fridge for up to four days, but a professor of food microbiology at Cornell University, says that they can potentially last for up to a week depending on how they're handled.

– Food preparation surfaces, cooking equipment and utensils must be cleaned with soapy water and sanitized with a solution of ¼ cup chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Illness-causing germs can survive in many places around your kitchen, including your food, hands, utensils, and cutting boards.

–Keep raw food separate from cooked foods. Raw food and cooked food should be stored separately in the fridge. Bacteria from raw food can contaminate cold cooked food, and the bacteria can multiply to dangerous levels if the food is not cooked thoroughly again. Always store raw food in sealed or covered containers at the bottom of the fridge.

– Always wear clean gloves when working with cooked or raw foods. Contamination can occur after using the bathroom, smoking, coughing, sneezing, and in between preparing raw and cooked foods.

Remember when in doubt throw it out and keep hands clean!!!!!!!!!!

We have several resources on the Orange County Environmental Health and Code Compliance: <https://www.co.orange.tx.us/departments/EnvironmentalHealthCodeCompliance/FoodService>

For more information visit <https://www.fda.gov/food/consumers/food-safety-education-month>

