



Food Hygiene Advice for Student Groups/Voluntary Groups



This publication contains guidance notes to help student societies prepare and serve food for others in an hygienic manner.

HOW THIS LEAFLET WILL HELP YOU

This leaflet from Lancaster City Council gives advice on good food hygiene practice, which if followed, should ensure the safe production and service of food.

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NOTE

Before contemplating undertaking any form of catering activity, you must ensure that you check with the University to ensure that your proposed activity is permitted.

FOOD HYGIENE

Any person, group or organisation that provides food (or drink) for members of the public has a legal obligation to ensure that it is safe to eat. Failure to do so could result in the Local Authority taking enforcement action including prosecution, if the food is deemed to be unsafe as defined in Regulation(EC) 852/2004, and the General Food Regulations 2004.

This leaflet provides basic information aimed at helping those involved in the small-scale preparation of food to reduce the risk of an outbreak of food related illness occurring as a result of their actions, and is ideally aimed at those organisations considering holding barbecues or baking simple foods eg. sponge cakes. If your organisation/group is considering an event on a larger scale, you must contact this Service for advice to ensure that you are given advice regarding food safety relevant to the event.

1. Food Poisoning

Food poisoning is an illness that is caused by consuming food or drink that has been contaminated by bacteria, viruses, metals or chemicals. The typical symptoms of such an illness may include diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach pains, headache and fever.

2. Common Sources of Food Poisoning Bacteria

- The food handler. Everyone carries bacteria (on their clothes and skin and in their mouth, nose, bowel, etc).
- Raw foods. Bacteria will be found, often in very large numbers, on raw food such as raw meat, fish and eggs and unwashed vegetables.
- Pets and pests.
- Dirty work surfaces and cleaning cloths.



3. Food Hygiene Management

The risks to food and the measures that need to be taken to reduce these risks will vary depending on the type and quantity of food being prepared at your premises. For example service of only drinks and biscuits will present little risk of food poisoning but where meals or sandwiches are being prepared and served the potential risks are much greater.

Before preparing any food, those responsible should ensure that they think about the foods they intend to prepare, and identify any steps in the course of preparation of those foods that are critical to ensuring food safety and ensure that adequate safety checks are undertaken.

Wherever possible food should be prepared in commercial kitchens.

The FSA have produced a free pack called 'Safer Food Better Business' that may be of interest to larger groups and this can be obtained by telephoning: 0845 606 0667.

If you require any more information about this requirement please contact our department on 582711.

4. Food Hygiene Training

An understanding of basic food hygiene principles is essential if food hygiene is to be managed and implemented. It is strongly recommended that at least one person from each group involved in handling food undertakes formal training eg the Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene. Further details of local training providers can be obtained from our office or via our web site: www.lancaster.gov.uk.

5. Personal Hygiene

Food handlers are responsible for ensuring their own personal hygiene and for protecting food against the risk of contamination.

The importance of hand washing cannot be over emphasised. Food handlers should always thoroughly wash and dry their hands:

- ◆ before preparing or handling any food;
- ◆ after visiting the toilet; and
- ◆ after carrying out any function which may result in hands being contaminated (e.g. blowing their nose, handling raw food, handling waste, etc);
- ◆ after handling nappies, or soiled waste.

Remember that hand washing will not remove all bacteria from hands so it is good practice to handle food as little as possible e.g. use clean tongs, spoons etc. whenever possible.

If you are having a barbecue outside, ensure that you take an alcohol-based hand gel to enable all food handlers to keep their hands clean if you do not have access to hot water, soap and towels etc.

6. The Structure of the Kitchen

- The use of a domestic or shared kitchen for the preparation of food for sale etc presents a potential risk of contamination to the food so prepared, particularly in the case of a shared kitchen, given that others out with of your control have use of the kitchen, equipment and refrigeration space. If the use of such a kitchen is unavoidable you must ensure that all work surfaces are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and that whenever food requires refrigerated storage there is adequate refrigerated storage space, the refrigerator must be capable of keeping food below 8°C, and must be placed in the fridge so as to avoids any potential risk of contamination from raw food, particularly raw meat and eggs.
- The size and layout should enable food handlers to work safely. A student kitchen should not be used for the preparation of function meals.
- There should be a logical flow of food preparation to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
- The surfaces in the kitchen, particularly food preparation surfaces, must be capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected.
- Sufficient facilities must be provided for the washing of food utensils.

- A hand wash facility must be available with soap, hot and cold or warm water and suitable hand drying facilities.
- Adequate storage must be provided for food and refuse.
- Other areas that need to be considered include: pest control; ventilation; lighting; storage for outdoor clothing, wearing protective clothing etc.

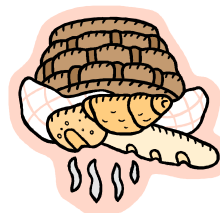
7. Purchasing Foods

Check that the food that you intend to purchase/use looks fresh and that it is within its use-by or best before date. Perishable foods that require refrigeration should be placed in a refrigerator or in a cool box/bag containing ice packs as soon as possible after purchase.

Storage of Food

Correct storage of food should:

- Reduce the risk of contamination;
- Prevent the growth of bacteria; and
- Protect the quality of the food stored.



Foods such as canned and dried foods should be stored in a clean dry area away from chemicals. Once dried foods (e.g. milk) are reconstituted and canned or bottled foods opened, they should be handled and stored as if they were fresh foods. Also, once a tin has been opened, any unused portion should be stored in a suitable container not in the open can.

8. Refrigeration

Most food poisoning bacteria will grow at temperatures between 5°C and 63°C. This temperature is known as THE DANGER ZONE. The recommended operating temperatures for refrigerators is between 0°C and 5°C and for freezers is between -18°C and -23°C.

Remember that cold temperatures do not kill bacteria but merely slow down or stop their rate of growth.

In order to ensure the safety of refrigerated foods it is important that:

- The refrigerator is working effectively and the required temperature maintained; and
- Ready to eat foods are protected from contamination by other foods, especially raw foods such as meat, eggs and unwashed vegetables.

Some ways in which this can be achieved are:

- Keep a fridge thermometer in the fridge and check the temperature daily to ensure that it is operating at the correct temperature. If it is not then adjust the thermostat dial and check the temperature reading again after a couple of hours

(remember that numbers on the thermostat dial do not display the temperature in degrees, and the higher the number, the colder the fridge will be)

- It is recommended that a written record is kept of daily temperature checks so that the overall performance and efficiency of the refrigerator can be monitored. Such records would assist you to demonstrate that you operate in a due diligent manner.
- Do not leave the door of the refrigerator open for longer than necessary.
- Do not put hot food inside the refrigerator. Cool foods as quickly as possible (within max 90 minutes at room temperature) then refrigerate. Although some foods may still feel warm they are cool enough to be refrigerated.
- Ideally, separate refrigerators should be used for the storage of raw and cooked/ready to eat foods. If this is not possible separate these foods by storing the cooked/ready to eat foods on the shelves above the raw foods.
- Keep all foods in the refrigerator wrapped or covered.
- Don't use food beyond its "use by" date.
- Keep the refrigerator clean and defrost freezers as soon as ice begins to build up.

9. Preparation of Food

Safe Preparation of food is dependent on:

- Preventing contamination of food. Ensure that separate surfaces and equipment are used for raw food and for ready to eat food. Ensure that all persons involved in handling food wash their hands before they do so, and that they wash their hands after handling raw food before handling cooked food.
- Preventing growth of bacteria by keeping food out of the "Danger Zone"; and/or
- Destruction of bacteria by thoroughly cooking or reheating the food to above 75°C and where necessary holding it at a temperature above 63°C. Visible checks can also be made on foods to ensure that it has been thoroughly cooked eg by cutting meat/burgers to check that there are no "pink bits", and that the juices run clear.



Ideally all foods should be prepared and served immediately. Preparation of food in advance increases the time available for bacteria to multiply and therefore considerably increases the risk of food poisoning. Where foods have to be prepared in advance they should either be cooled to room temperature as quickly as possible and placed in the refrigerator within 90 minutes, or kept hot (above 63°C) until served.

It is recommended that a written record is kept of temperature checks on food so that you can demonstrate that food has been thoroughly cooked/re-heated.

10. Reheating of Foods

If food has to be reheated, it must be reheated thoroughly to above 75°C so that all parts are piping hot. Foods should never be reheated more than once. If a microwave oven is used it is important to follow the instructions in your microwave book regarding reheating times, stirring or turning certain foods and standing times to ensure the food is reheated thoroughly and that the heat is evenly distributed.

11. Cleaning and Disinfection

The aim of this section is to provide basic guidelines on cleaning and disinfection to devise effective and safe cleaning procedures.

The importance of effective cleaning and disinfection in helping to achieve safe preparation of food cannot be over emphasised. However, other hygiene factors below are also important and will help to make cleaning and disinfection easier and more effective:

- Encouraging good personal hygiene (especially hand washing).
- Exclude anyone suffering from infectious diseases from food preparation.
- Correct storage and disposal of waste.
- Provision and maintenance of easily cleanable surfaces and equipment.
- Tidiness and avoidance of unnecessary clutter.

12. Management of Cleaning Within Your Property

All surfaces and equipment intended to be used in conjunction with the preparation of food should be thoroughly washed with hot soapy water and should then be disinfected using a food safe disinfectant eg. Milton or a food safe disinfectant or sanitiser which will result in the removal of most bacteria.

Remember disinfection is not an alternative to cleaning but an additional stage. Except for sanitising agents (which clean and disinfect at the same time), most disinfectants are not designed to remove dirt and grease and their effective use often relies on any such dirt being removed first.

Product labels and leaflets should supply most of the information you need regarding a particular chemical. Also manufacturers/suppliers are usually happy to supply additional information and advice about their products and the range of products you are likely to need.

13. Safe and Effective use of Chemicals

To enable chemicals to be used safely the following points should be borne in mind:-

- Always read the manufacturers instructions carefully and follow them.
- Always make sure that everyone using the chemicals knows how to use them correctly.
- Never make up solutions of chemicals a long time in advance. Many chemicals are unstable once they have been diluted and will rapidly become less effective.

- Never mix different chemicals or solutions of chemicals. Chemicals may react with each other if mixed causing them to lose their effectiveness or to release harmful gases.
- Never use chemicals in concentrations greater than those recommended by the manufacturer – increasing the concentration will not necessarily increase the effectiveness of the chemical and can be dangerous as well as expensive.

14. Care and Storage of Cleaning Equipment

To prevent bacterial cross contamination, you are advised to use paper towels to wipe surfaces and clean up spillages. If fabric cloths are to be used they should be clean and disinfected at the start and separate cloths should be used in raw food areas to those used in cooked food areas.

Should you require any further information, booklets or advice please contact us using the details below:

Write to:

Health and Strategic Housing
Morecambe Town Hall
Marine Road
Morecambe
LA4 5AF

Tel: 01524 582935

Fax: 01524 582709

e-mail: environmentalhealth@lancaster.gov.uk

Or see our website:

www.lancaster.gov.uk