

## Food Safety Tips for a Commercial Kitchen

Each year the CDC reports that nearly 1 in 6 individuals will get sick from foodborne illness because of food safety. Many people such as pregnant women, older adults, young children, and people with weak immune systems are at a greater risk for foodborne illnesses.

A well-run kitchen means maintaining the utmost cleanliness and safe conditions for food preparation. If you contaminate an area with Salmonella or other bacteria, you, and your customers and even your family could get very sick.

Here are some tips to follow to make sure the food you prepare or serve in a restaurant, school, church, other facility and even at home meets the safety standards to provide the best for your customers.

**Promote hand washing** – The most important safety tip is handwashing. This will minimize cross-contamination and let your employees have clean hands before touching any food. Even the smallest bacteria can make someone sick. All food workers need to wash their hands at least 20 seconds with hot water and soap.

**Don't let sick workers prepare food** – People who prepare food while sick put customers and workers at risk of getting sick.

**Use gloves** – Food workers should be wearing kitchen gloves when preparing food in a commercial kitchen. You can't use the same gloves for everything. It is important to change gloves regularly if they become contaminated.

**Cook to the right temperatures** – Make sure food is cooked to the right temperatures: Poultry, stuffing, and leftovers to 165 degrees F., Ground meats and eggs for holding to 155 degrees F, for 17 seconds. Steaks, roasts, fish, and eggs for immediate serving 145 degrees F for 15 seconds, all other cooked foods 135 degrees F.

**Avoid Cross-Contamination** – Many foodborne illnesses come from cross-contamination, where you spread bacteria from raw meat to ready-to-eat foods. You should prepare raw meats separately from other foods. Use separate cutting boards, cleaning, and sanitizing after handling raw meats and handling other things. Clean and sanitize work surfaces. Washing hands after handling money or using the restroom to prevent cross-contamination.

**Store Food correctly at the right temperature.** Keep meat and poultry separate from other foods, including vegetables, sauces and anything that requires little preparation. Food should be cooled to 41 degrees F. or below and should be cooled in a way that provides ventilation such as a shallow pan. You also make sure your raw meat doesn't drip and contaminate other food. Cut fruits and vegetables should not be left out at room temperature. Never store food on the floor and have a thermometer in the refrigerator as well as the freezer.

**Clean and sanitize preparation surfaces and equipment regularly.** Use soapy water to clean and follow with a sanitize solution to clean dishes, countertops, and equipment regularly.

**Label food well by date.** Practice FIFO with your food, First In, First Out. It is better to throw out food that puts people at risk.

**Train your staff.** Ongoing informal and formal training is important. If you don't have training for your staff, you are increasing the risk of unsafe food served.

**Know the Danger Zone and Two-Hour Rule.** The temperature danger zone is the range of temperature where bacteria will multiply rapidly. The danger zone is 41 degrees F to 135 degrees F. Food should not sit in the temperature zone for more than 2 hours. Checking temperatures, thawing foods properly and cooling food properly is important.

For more information about food safety, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and [FoodSafety.gov](http://FoodSafety.gov).