

What is Food Hygiene?

As an important part of food safety and ensuring the health and well-being of consumers, food hygiene is the practice of handling, preparing, and storing food in a way that prevents foodborne illnesses. Also, it's a set of guidelines designed to keep food safe from contamination and spoilage.

Everyone involved in the food industry must understand and practice food hygiene and adhere to strict [food safety](#) regulations. The practice of food hygiene involves the use of proper sanitation and cleaning practices, as well as the use of [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#).

Who is Responsible for It?

Everyone in the food chain has a responsibility to ensure that food is safe and free from contamination. This includes food producers, processors, distributors, retailers, caterers, and consumers.

Food hygiene is especially important for those who work in the food industry, such as chefs, cooks, and food handlers. They must be aware of the risks associated with food contamination and take steps to prevent it. This practice is also important for those who work in food-related businesses, such as restaurants, cafeterias, and grocery stores. These businesses must ensure that their employees are properly trained in food safety and hygiene practices and that their premises are kept clean and free from hazards. They must also ensure that their food is stored and handled correctly to avoid contamination.

Food safety and sanitation



Cook

- 1 Cook food to the recommended internal temperature.



Clean

- 1 Practice food hygiene (e.g. handwashing, not working when sick, wearing hair net, etc)
- 2 Thoroughly clean and sanitize food contact surfaces and equipment before and after use.
- 3 Only use the suggested level of cleaning and sanitizing solutions for kitchen surfaces.



Store

- 1 Properly store foods inside a refrigerator. Follow the recommended fridge food safety layout.
- 2 Maintain at least 40°F (4°C) during refrigeration and 0°F (-18°C) for freezing temperatures.
- 3 Maintain a temperature of 135°F (57°C) for hot holding foods.
- 4 Storage areas must always be clean.



Separate

- 1 Use separate utensils and kitchen tools for preparing raw and ready-to-eat foods.
- 2 Do not use a shared preparation table for raw and ready-to-eat foods.



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What is the Difference Between Food Hygiene and Food Safety?

Food safety refers to a wide range of practices and aspects that food businesses apply as part of their [Food Safety Management System \(FSMS\)](#). One aspect of it is food hygiene, which focuses on implementing food safety measures while maintaining cleanliness and orderliness in the workplace as workers deal with food products.

Further, food hygiene aims to:

- provide education and training on proper and safe [food handling](#) for the people involved in food processing, preparation, and manufacturing;
- maintain and extend food shelf life through clean processing;
- prevent food spoilage due to contamination caused by unhygienic working practices and workplace conditions; and
- avoid producing and selling unsafe food that may threaten public health.

Why is Food Hygiene Important?

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) estimates that 1.35 million illnesses, 26,500 hospitalizations, and 420 deaths in the United States yearly are caused by *Salmonella*. *Salmonella* infections are commonly contracted by eating raw food or undercooked meat, which are possibly due to unhygienic food preparation, unsafe food handling, or cross-contamination.

Hence, the practice of food hygiene not only helps businesses improve the quality of their products and services but also ensures people are safe when buying and consuming food. Apart from those, the following are the various benefits of implementing and maintaining food hygiene best practices:

Mitigate the Risk of Foodborne Illnesses

Food handlers who practice proper food hygiene can reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses, which can be caused by bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Also, safe and hygienic preparation of food is key to reducing the risk of food spoilage and lessening food waste.

Protect Business Reputation

Food businesses can demonstrate to their customers that they are taking the necessary steps to ensure the safety of their food. This can foster and maintain customer trust and loyalty, leading to increased sales and profits.

Reduce Environmental Impact

Food hygiene also plays a key role in helping businesses become eco-friendly in various ways. This includes reducing the amount of food waste that is produced, as well as the amount of energy and water used in the preparation and production of food.

Types

There are several different types of food hygiene that must be followed in order to ensure the safety of food. Some of these include the following:

Personal Hygiene

This includes washing hands before and after handling food, wearing clean clothes and hairnets, and avoiding contact with food if you have any open wounds or cuts. It's also important to keep food preparation areas clean and free from pests.

Food Storage

This type involves storing food at the correct temperature, using separate containers for raw and cooked food, and ensuring that food is not left out of the refrigerator for too long. It is also essential to label food with the date it was prepared and discard any food that has been left out for too long.

Food Preparation Hygiene

This includes washing all fruits and vegetables before use, cooking food to the correct temperature, and avoiding cross-contamination between raw and cooked food. It is also important to use clean utensils and surfaces when preparing food.

Risks of Not Practicing Food Hygiene

Food Contamination and Poisoning

Not following proper food hygiene practices can lead to food contamination. This can cause food poisoning, foodborne illnesses such as Salmonella and E. coli infections, and a range of symptoms, from mild stomach upset to severe dehydration and even death.

Quick Food Spoilage

Not following food hygiene practices can also lead to the growth of bacteria and other microorganisms in food. This can cause food to spoil quickly, leading to food waste and financial losses.

Spread of Pests

Pests such as rodents and insects can contaminate food and spread diseases, as well as cause damage to food storage areas and equipment. In addition, pests can also spread [allergens](#), which can cause serious health problems.