

# Washington State **Food Worker Manual**



# Thank you for taking an active role in food safety.

**The information in this manual will help you store, prepare, and serve food safely.**

Food safety knowledge prevents foodborne illness. Use what you learn from this manual at work and home.

**After you read this manual, we hope you will remember these tips:**

- 1** Never work when you are sick.
- 2** Wash your hands well and when needed.
- 3** Don't touch ready to eat food with bare hands.
- 4** Keep food hot or cold.
- 5** Cook food to the right temperature.
- 6** Cool hot food quickly.
- 7** Keep raw meat away from other food.
- 8** Clean and sanitize food equipment and keep your facility clean.
- 9** Always get food from a safe source or supplier.
- 10** Continue to learn and ask questions.

**Remember:** You are the most important ingredient in safe food!

# Contents

Foodborne Illness .....	1
Foodborne Illness Prevention .....	2
Food Worker Health .....	3
Highly Susceptible Populations.....	4
Hazards in Food.....	5
Temperature Control for Safety Food.....	7
Handwashing .....	8
How to Wash Your Hands .....	9
Bare Hand Contact .....	10
Cooking.....	11
Thermometer Use .....	12
Hot Holding.....	13
Cold Holding.....	14
Date Marking .....	15
Cooling .....	16
Cross Contamination.....	18
Safe Food Sources .....	19
Food Allergies .....	20
Clean and Sanitize.....	21
Dishwashing .....	22
Vomit and Diarrhea Cleanup .....	23
Food Protection .....	24
Pest Control .....	25
Emergencies.....	26

The information in this manual is an overview of the Washington State Retail Food Code WAC 246-215. It does not include all requirements. Use this manual with approved Food Worker Training. Contact your local health department for more information.

This manual is available in other formats for people with disabilities.  
Please call (800) 525-0127 (TDD/TTY call 711) to submit a request.

# Foodborne Illness

People get sick with foodborne illness when they eat food with harmful germs in it. Germs can get into food at any time. It's important to learn how to handle food safely to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

## Symptoms

Some foodborne illnesses cause symptoms like:



Diarrhea



Vomiting



Fever

Symptoms can be very serious and cause people to go to the hospital or die. Children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with chronic illness are more likely to get seriously ill.

## Stay home if you feel sick.

Do not work with food when you are sick. Sick food workers can spread germs to food, surfaces, utensils, and other people.

**Do you have:**

Diarrhea or vomiting?	Yellow skin or eyes?
Do not work around food until you have no symptoms for at least 24 hours.	Stay home and see a doctor.

**Do not go to work if you have:**

- Hepatitis A
- *Salmonella*
- *Shigella*
- *E. coli*
- Norovirus

**Foodborne illness is very common.**

Foodborne illnesses per year:



**48,000,000**

Hospitalizations caused by foodborne illnesses per year:



**128,000**

Deaths caused by foodborne illnesses per year:



**3,000**

Data source: CDC

## Report foodborne illness.

Most cases go unreported.

Report foodborne illness to your local health department immediately. They will help make sure more people don't get sick.



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# Foodborne Illness Prevention

Keeping food safe takes planning. Plan how to safely store, prepare, and handle food.

## Active Managerial Control

This is an active approach to food safety. Managers create procedures, train employees, and monitor to keep food safe.

### Examples include:

- Check for ill food workers and keep them out of the establishment.
- Train workers to cook, cool, and store food safely.
- Teach employees when and how to wash hands.
- Make sure employees do not touch food with bare hands.
- Develop temperature logs and check food temperatures.
- Decide who will take temperatures and when.
- Specify a place to prepare raw food.
- Call for repairs and fix things that go wrong.
- Create a plan to clean-up after someone vomits or has diarrhea.

Everyone is responsible for food safety, but you need someone to make sure it is a priority.

## Person in Charge

Every food establishment must have a Person in Charge. They make sure food is safely prepared.

### The Person in Charge:

- Is there when you are operating.
- Has knowledge and training to make sure food is safe.
- Verifies employees follow food safety practices.
- Makes sure no one works with food when they are sick.
- Answers employee questions.

You are the Person in Charge if you are the only person in the food establishment.

Make sure you have the training to keep food safe.

## Certified Food Protection Manager

Work with a Certified Food Protection Manager. They have additional training and a certificate in food safety management. They help the Person in Charge. Together they train, check, and provide ways to prevent foodborne illness.



**Person in Charge can be called PIC.**

# Food Worker Health

A healthy food worker helps prevent foodborne illness. Do not work with food if you feel sick. You can spread germs to food and other people.

## Do not go to work if you have:

- Diarrhea, vomiting, or jaundice
- *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *E. coli*, hepatitis A, or norovirus
- A sore throat with a fever and work with a Highly Susceptible Population

**Do not work until vomiting and diarrhea are gone for at least 24 hours.**

Call the health department if you are diagnosed with illness or jaundice.



## Do not work with food or anything that touches food if you have:

- An infected wound you cannot cover
- Sneezing, coughing, or a runny nose
- A sore throat with a fever
- Been near someone with foodborne illness and you work with a Highly Susceptible Population

## You can do jobs like:

- Take out the trash
- Sweep
- Mop
- Clean restrooms

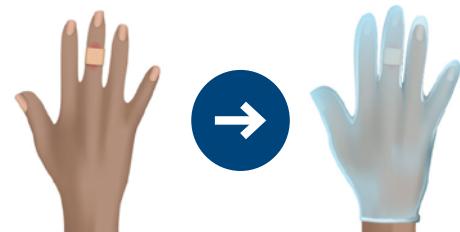
Tell the Person in Charge if you have been near someone with foodborne illness.

## Personal Hygiene

Food workers can spread germs to food even if they look and feel healthy. Keep germs from getting into food with good personal hygiene.

### Tips for good hygiene:

- Do not work with food when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often.
- Use utensils or clean gloves to handle food.
- Trim and clean fingernails.
- Wear clean clothing.
- Keep hair tied back, short, or covered with a hair net.
- Do not wear your apron or gloves to the bathroom.
- Cover a cut, burn, or sore on your hand with a bandage and a disposable glove.



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# Highly Susceptible Populations

Anyone can get sick from food, but some people are more likely than others.

This includes people who are:



Young



Older



Pregnant



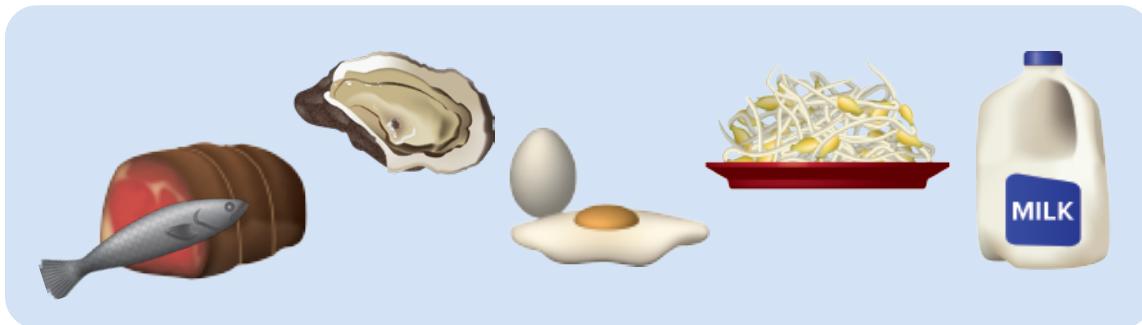
Immune-compromised  
with conditions like  
cancer, diabetes, or AIDS

Take extra care serving Highly Susceptible Populations at:

- Hospitals
- Preschools
- Nursing homes

**Highly susceptible people should not eat food like:**

- Undercooked meat, fish, or eggs
- Raw oysters
- Raw sprouts
- Unpasteurized milk or juice



# Hazards in Food

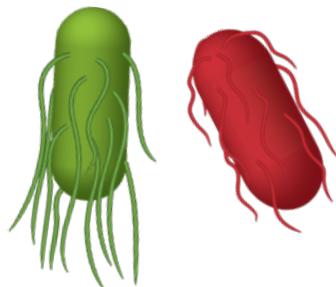
Food can make us sick if it is contaminated with germs, chemicals, or physical hazards. Reduce the risk by learning to handle food safely.

## Biological Contamination

Germs like bacteria, viruses, and parasites can make us sick. When people talk about the stomach flu or the 24-hour flu, this is foodborne illness. Common symptoms are vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, and fever. Symptoms can start a couple of hours to several weeks after eating.

### Bacteria

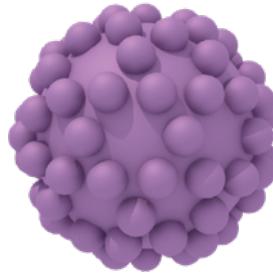
Bacteria can come from food, equipment, or people. Food workers must be careful. Bacteria grow easily in food with the right nutrients, moisture, temperature, and time. Keep food hot or cold, work quickly, and wash your hands. Use utensils or gloves to work with ready to eat food.



### Viruses

Viruses are small and it only takes a few to make you sick. Viruses, like norovirus or hepatitis A, are spread by:

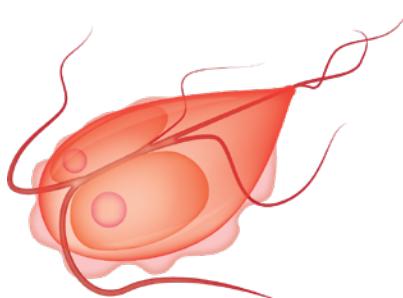
- Sick food workers
- Poor handwashing
- Touching food with bare hands



Some viruses can remain on your hands even after good handwashing. It is possible to spread a virus even when you don't feel sick. That's why it is important to use a utensil or wear gloves to handle ready to eat food.

### Parasites

Parasites are tiny worms or cysts. They live in fish, meat, produce, or contaminated water. Kill parasites by cooking food to the right temperature. Most parasites are killed when frozen at very cold temperatures for a long time.



## Tips to keep food safe:

- Do not work when you are sick, especially with vomiting, diarrhea, or fever.
- Do not touch ready to eat\* food with your bare hands. Use tongs, utensils, or gloves.
- Keep food hot at 135°F or above or cold at 41°F or below.
- Work quickly and do not leave food out.
- Quickly cool and reheat food.
- Cook all fish and meat to the right temperature.
- Use fish that has been frozen to kill parasites for raw food like sushi.
- Wash your hands after using the restroom and before you enter the kitchen.
- Wash raw produce with clean water.
- Keep raw and ready to eat food separate.
- Clean and sanitize surfaces.
- Use approved sources of water.

\*Ready to eat food can be eaten without washing or cooking to remove germs.

## Chemical Contamination

Chemicals can make you sick if they get into food. Store chemicals like soap, cleaner, and sanitizer safely. Keep chemicals below food and work surfaces. A chemical should not be able to drip into food or onto work surfaces.

**Label chemicals and follow directions carefully.**

Protect food when you clean. Only keep chemicals you need.

**Contact a licensed pest control company for help with pest problems.**

Never use a homestyle pesticide.

**Only use containers safe for food.**

Do not use grocery bags, galvanized cans, or copper. Never reuse chemical containers. Chemicals can get into food.



## Physical Hazards

Physical hazards are objects in food that can cause injury if eaten. Examples include broken glass, jewelry, bandages, pieces of metal, and fingernails.

**Tips to keep food safe from physical hazards:**

- Make sure things cannot fall into food.
- Inspect equipment. Make sure there are no loose or broken pieces.
- Throw out grill brushes and utensils if they show signs of wear.
- Do not wear jewelry. You may wear a single ring or wedding set covered by a glove.
- Cover artificial nails with a glove.
- Always use an ice scoop. Do not scoop ice with a glass.
- Look closely at food you prepare.
- Inspect fruits and vegetables carefully.



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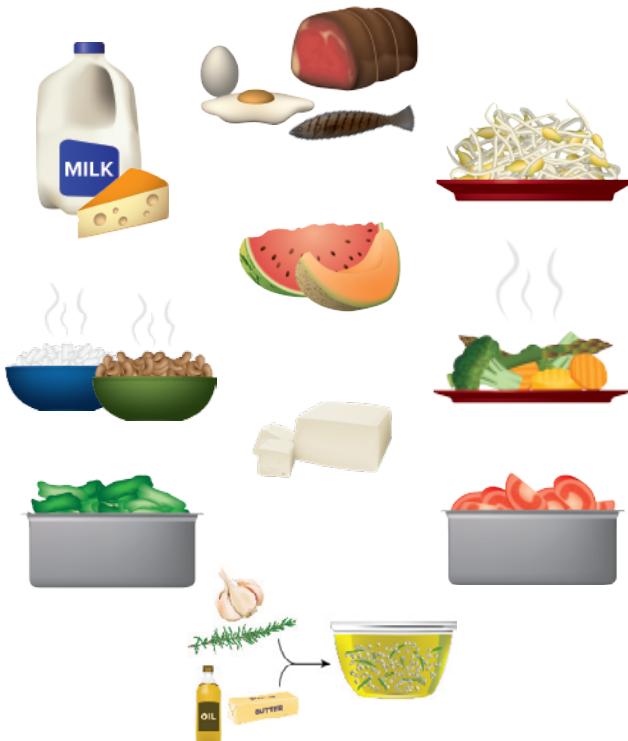


# Temperature Control for Safety Food

Any food can cause foodborne illness, but bacteria are more likely to grow in some food. These are called Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) food. Keep these foods hot or cold to prevent bacteria from growing.

## Examples of Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods:

- Meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs
- Dairy products
- Tofu
- Cooked beans, potatoes, rice, pasta, and noodles
- Cooked fruits and vegetables
- Cut melons
- Cut leafy greens
- Cut tomatoes
- Sprouts, such as alfalfa or bean sprouts
- Fresh garlic or herbs in oil
- Whipped butter



Time and  
temperature work  
together to keep  
food safe.

Learn how to use  
time to keep food  
safe. Work with  
your Certified  
Food Protection  
Manager for  
more information.

## Danger Zone

Bacteria grow best between 41°F and 135°F. This is called the Danger Zone. Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) food left in the Danger Zone allow bacteria to grow fast. Some bacteria make toxins that make people sick. Toxins stay in food, even when cooked.

### Tips for keeping food safe:

- Keep cold food at 41°F or colder.
- Keep hot food at 135°F or hotter.
- Prepare food quickly.
- Work with small amounts of food at a time.
- Quickly cool food in a refrigerator. Never cool on the counter.
- Reheat food quickly.
- Check temperature of food with a thermometer.

Food left in the Danger Zone may not be safe to eat.  
When in doubt, throw it out.



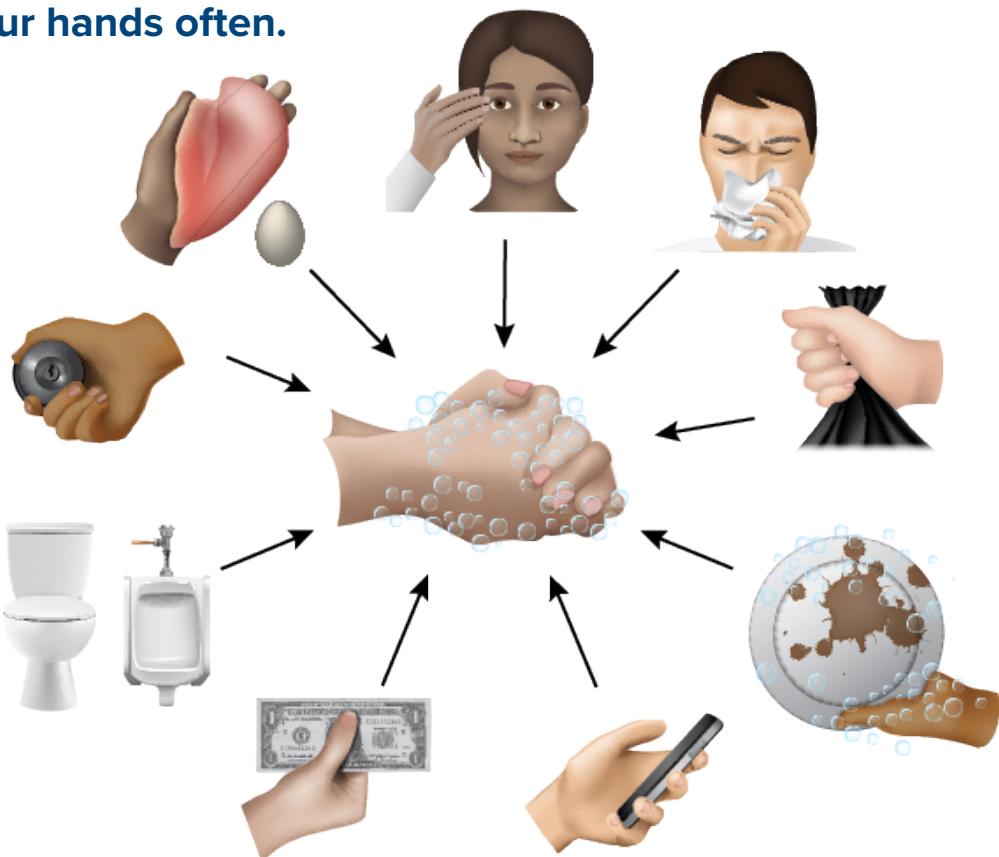
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# Handwashing

The best way to prevent foodborne illness is to wash your hands. Germs on your hands can get into food when you don't wash your hands correctly. You can't see germs with your eyes, so you can spread germs even if your hands look clean.

## Wash your hands often.



### Wash your hands after you:

- Use the bathroom
- Enter the kitchen
- Touch raw meat, seafood, poultry, or eggs
- Touch your hair or face
- Cough or sneeze
- Handle garbage, dirty dishes, money, or chemicals
- Eat, drink, or smoke
- Take a break or use your phone

### Hand Sanitizer

Do not use hand sanitizer instead of handwashing. You may use a hand sanitizer after washing your hands.

Wash whenever your hands are dirty.



Trim fingernails so they are easy to clean. Wear gloves over painted or artificial fingernails to prepare food. For example, wear gloves to stir soup if you have artificial fingernails.

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# How to Wash Your Hands

Only wash your hands in a handwash sink. Do not wash your hands in a food preparation sink or a 3-compartment sink.

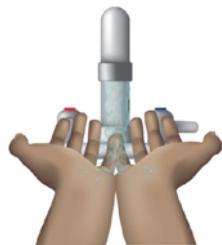
Handwash sinks must have hot and cold running water, soap and paper towels or an air dryer. Do not block a handwash sink or store anything inside it.

## Follow these steps to wash your hands.

From start to finish, it should take at least 20 seconds.

1

Wet your hands with warm water.



2

Apply plenty of soap.



3

Scrub your hands for 10-15 seconds.  
Scrub under your fingernails, between fingers, and wrist.



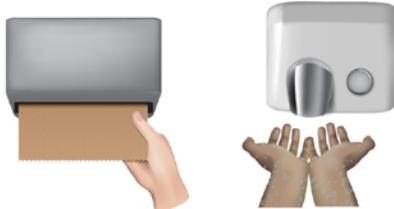
4

Rinse your hands with running water.



5

Dry your hands with a paper towel or air dryer.



6

Turn off water with a paper towel.



Use paper towels or an air dryer to dry your hands.

Drying your hands with a cloth or apron can spread germs back to your hands.

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# Bare Hand Contact

Never touch ready to eat food with your bare hands. Even with good handwashing, some germs remain on your hands and can get onto food.

## Ready to eat food

Ready to eat food can be eaten without washing or cooking to remove germs.

Examples:

- **Washed fruits and vegetables that will not get cooked.**  
Like sliced fruit, salad, pickles, and drink garnishes.
- **Bakery or bread items.**  
Like toast, cake, cookies, and tortillas.
- **Cooked food.**  
Like pizza, hamburgers, hot dogs, and tacos.
- **Food that will not get cooked.**  
Like sandwiches, sushi, deli meat, and ice for drinks.

**Use disposable gloves, tongs, scoops, deli tissue, or other utensils to handle ready to eat food.**

For example, use tongs for salad and deli tissue to handle cookies. Wear gloves to make a sandwich, prepare sushi, or slice vegetables.

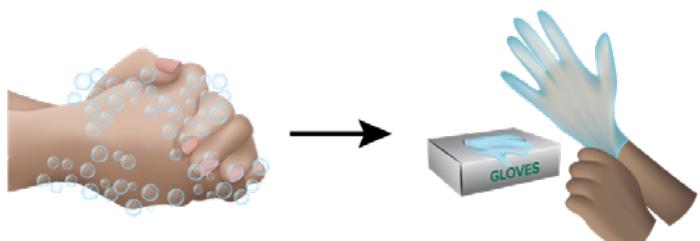


## Gloves

Dirty hands can put germs on the outside of gloves. Gloves are used to protect food from germs, not to protect your hands from the food.

**Remember these rules for using gloves:**

- Wash hands before putting on gloves.
- Only use disposable gloves.
- Never wash or reuse gloves.
- Throw gloves away after use.
- Change gloves that get ripped.
- Change gloves that may be contaminated.
- Remove gloves and wash hands after working with raw food.
- Use gloves to cover cuts, sores, or bandages.



*Reduce waste. If you use a utensil, like tongs or a scoop, you don't need to wear gloves.*

# Cooking

Harmful germs live in raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs. Proper cooking kills germs and makes these foods safe to eat.

## Cooking Temperatures

**135°F**

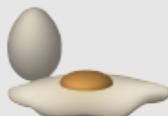
- Vegetables, fruits, herbs, and grains that will be kept hot.
- Packaged ready to eat food, such as hot dogs and canned chili, that is reheated and kept hot.



**145°F**

(for 15 seconds)

- Eggs
- Seafood
- Beef
- Pork



**158°F**

(instantaneous)

- Hamburger
- Sausage



**165°F**

(instantaneous)

- Poultry (chicken, turkey, and duck)
- Stuffed foods or stuffing
- Casseroles
- Raw seafood, meat, or eggs cooked in a microwave
- Reheated Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) food



## Microwave cooking

When cooking raw seafood, meat, or eggs in a microwave, cook to at least 165°F. Cover the food to maintain moisture. Rotate or stir the food at least once while cooking. Allow the food to sit for 2 minutes before serving. Use your food thermometer. Check several places to make sure all of the food is at least 165°F.

## Consumer Advisory

Some foods, like sushi and eggs, may be served raw or undercooked. These foods can cause foodborne illness. Alert customers to the risk with a written consumer advisory on the menu.

Never serve raw or undercooked food to a Highly Susceptible Population or on a children's menu.

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# Thermometer Use

You can't tell if food is fully cooked by its color or how long it's been cooking. A thermometer is the only way to tell if food is fully cooked.



Every food establishment must have and use an accurate food thermometer. It must have a thin metal probe and be able to read temperatures between 0° and 220°F.

## Use a thermometer correctly to get an accurate temperature.



**Lift the food with a utensil or remove it from the cooking surface.** Don't measure the food when it's on the cooking surface.



**Poke the thermometer into the thickest part of the food.** Wait until the temperature on the thermometer stops changing. This can take up to a minute.



**Check your thermometer to make sure it is accurate.** Put the probe of the thermometer in a cup of crushed ice and water. The temperature should read 32°F. Adjust or replace the thermometer if it doesn't read 32°F.



**Always clean and sanitize your thermometer before and after use.** After cleaning, wipe with a sanitized cloth or use an alcohol wipe.

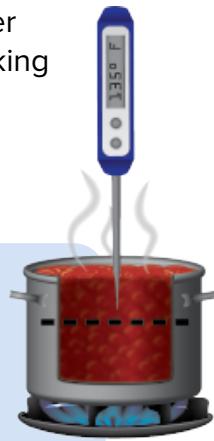
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# Hot Holding

Keep Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) food at 135°F or hotter until it is served or cooled safely. This is called hot holding. Cooking food does not kill all bacteria. If cooked food is not kept hot, surviving bacteria can grow and make people sick.

**Use a thermometer to check the temperature of hot food.**

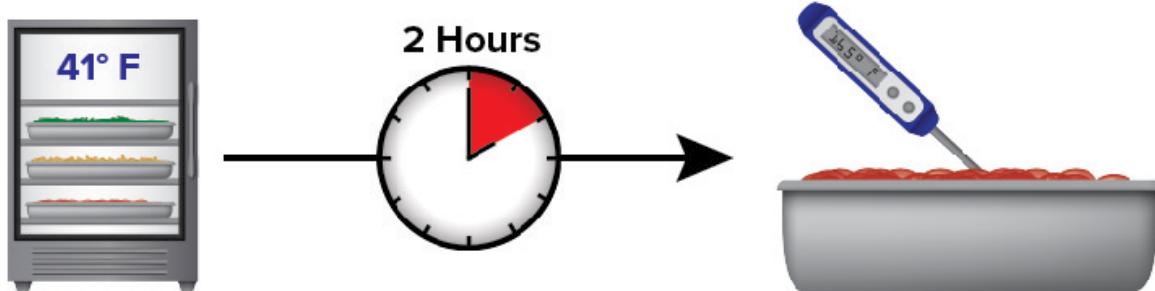


## Tips for keeping food hot:

- Make sure steam tables and food warmers are hot before adding food.
- Cover food and stir frequently.
- Do not add cold food to hot food.
- Check the food temperature often with a food thermometer.

## Reheating for hot holding

You can reheat food and serve it again if it was cooled safely. Reheat food rapidly to 165°F or higher within 2 hours.



- **Use a quick method to reheat food, like a stove, oven, or microwave.**  
Don't use a steam table, slow cooker, or food warmer to reheat food. This will take too long and allow bacteria to grow.
- **Stir food often while reheating.**  
Check the temperature in several places to make sure the food is completely reheated to 165°F.

## Reheating for immediate service

If you serve food immediately, you may reheat it to any temperature.

**Reheating is only safe when you cook and cool food correctly.**

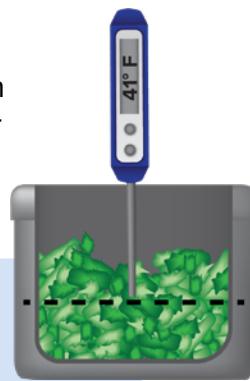
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# Cold Holding

Keep Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) food at 41°F or colder. This is called cold holding. Bacteria grow quickly when food is in the Danger Zone. Keep food cold in a refrigerator or surrounded by ice.

**Use a thermometer to check the temperature of cold food.**



## Tips for keeping food cold:

- Keep refrigerator doors shut as much as possible.
- In a prep cooler, use deeper pans and lids to help trap cold air. Do not overfill pans.
- If using ice, keep the ice level as high as the food level. Completely surround the container of food.
- Check the temperature often with a food thermometer.

## Thawing

**Thaw frozen food safely to keep bacteria from growing.**

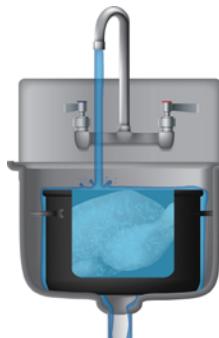
Never thaw food on the counter or at room temperature.

## There are 3 safe ways to thaw food:



### In the refrigerator.

This is the best method, but it can take a while. Plan ahead.



### In a food preparation sink.

Submerge food under cold running water. Never use hot water. Cook immediately or put it in the refrigerator once food is thawed.



### In a microwave.

Cook the food immediately after thawing.

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# Date Marking

Some bacteria still grow slowly in refrigerated foods. Date mark food to make sure it isn't kept for more than 7 days.

## Date mark cold food kept for more than 24 hours.

Especially foods like deli meats, hot dogs, smoked seafood, salads, milk, and soft cheeses.

### You do not need to date mark:

- Unopened commercial packages.
- Commercially made dressings, mayonnaise, and deli salads like potato salad.
- Whole uncut produce.
- Hard cheeses like parmesan and asiago.

## Serve or discard food within 7 days after you open it.

### When you open or prepare refrigerated ready to eat food, mark the date right away.

Start with the day you open or prepare the food and add 6 days. For example:

- If you open food on Dec. 12, add 6 days.  
Use by Dec. 18.
- If you open food on Friday, use by the following Thursday.



If you combine food with different dates, use the date mark of the oldest ingredient.

### Don't count days food is frozen.

Label food with the date it is frozen and the date it is put back in the refrigerator. Serve or discard food within a total of 7 days in the refrigerator.

For example:

- If you refrigerate food for 2 days and then freeze it, you can later refrigerate it for 5 more days before you discard it.



**You can date mark food in many ways. But it should be easy for everyone to understand and use. Always keep these foods at 41°F or below the entire time.**

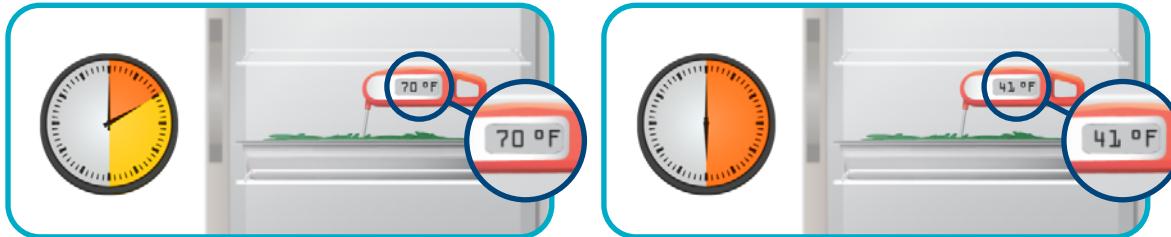
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# Cooling

You can cook food and cool it to serve later. It is important to cool food quickly. As food cools, it goes through the Danger Zone. If it doesn't cool fast enough, bacteria can grow and cause foodborne illness. Some bacteria produce a toxin or poison that cannot be cooked out.

**Cool food from 135°F to 41°F within a total of 6 hours.  
Food must cool to 70°F within the first 2 hours.**



**Check the temperature of food and make sure it cools quickly.**

**There are several ways to cool food quickly.**

## Shallow pan

Shallow pan cooling works well for foods like refried beans, rice, potatoes, ground meat, casserole, soup, and broth.

### Tips for shallow pan cooling:

- Put hot food into shallow pans.
- Food cannot be more than 2 inches deep.
- Leave the food uncovered so the heat can escape quickly.
- Refrigerate the food right away.
- Cool on the top shelf so nothing can fall into the uncovered food.
- Do not stack or cover cooling food.
- Cool in a walk-in cooler or your largest refrigerator.



**Check the food with a food thermometer.  
You can cover or combine pans once food reaches 41°F or below.**

## Cooling

### Reduce the size of whole cuts of meat.

Cut whole meats, like roasts or ham, into 4-inch thick pieces. Do not use this method for ground meats like meatloaf or gyro meat.

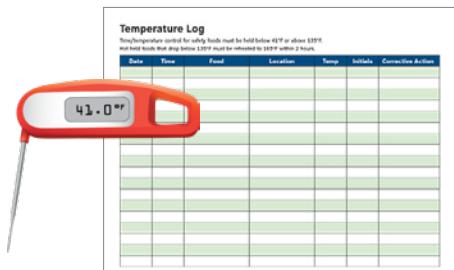


### Tips to cool large portions of meat:

- Place cut meat in a single layer on a tray.
- Allow plenty of air flow.
- Leave food uncovered so heat can escape quickly.
- Refrigerate food right away.
- Cool on the top shelf so nothing can drip into the food.

### Make sure food cools quickly.

Use a temperature log. Throw food away when it does not cool fast enough.



#### Cool from:

- ✓ 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours.
- ✓ 135°F to 41°F within 6 hours.

### Tips to cool food quickly:

- Place food in an ice bath. Completely surround food with ice. Stir often.
- Use ice paddles or ice wands to stir food.
- Use thin containers that allow heat to escape.
- Cool food in metal pans. Plastic or glass do not cool food as quickly.
- Add clean ice to food.
- Use special equipment like a blast chiller.

## Cool after preparation.

Foods like lettuce, tomatoes, or canned food may start at room temperature. Cool food to 41°F within 4 hours.



Use pre-chilled ingredients when possible.

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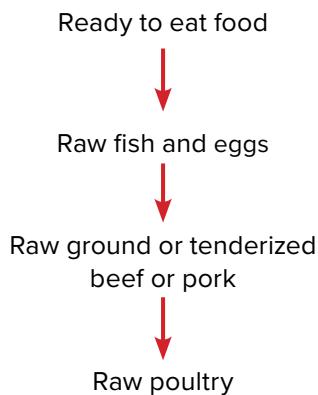
# Cross Contamination

Raw meats—like beef, poultry, seafood, and eggs—may have germs. Cross contamination happens when germs from raw meat get onto other food. Eating food contaminated by raw meat can cause foodborne illness.

## Keep raw meat separate from other food.

### Store raw meat below other food in the refrigerator.

Store raw meat on shelves in order of cooking temperature. The higher the cooking temperature, the lower the shelf. Store raw fish and eggs higher than ground beef and ground pork. Store chicken and poultry on the bottom.



### Prepare raw meat away from other food.

Use separate cutting boards and utensils. Prepare raw meat and produce in separate sinks.

## Clean and sanitize after you prepare raw meat.



Blood or juice from raw meat can get onto surfaces and other food. Clean and sanitize the counter, cutting board, sink, and utensils after you prepare raw meat.

**Wash hands after handling raw meat.**

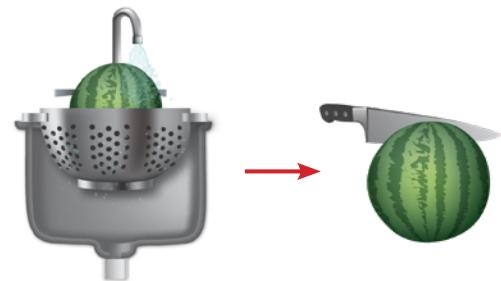
## Produce Washing

Produce can have germs, dirt, and pesticides on the outside.

### Wash produce before you prepare it, even if it will be cooked.

Rinse in cold running water. Do not use soap.

Wash produce, like avocados and melons, even though you don't eat the outside. A knife can carry germs and dirt from the outside to the inside of produce.



### Clean and sanitize work surfaces raw produce has touched.

Keep unwashed produce separate from washed produce. Store unwashed produce below ready to eat food.

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# Safe Food Sources

Food must come from a safe source approved by the health department. Only prepare food in the food establishment. Do not make food at home.

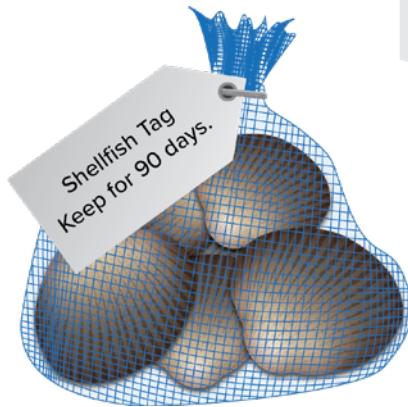
Beware of food sold online. Some food is not safe.  
Check with your local health department.

## Shellfish

Shellfish, like clams, oysters, or mussels, must come from a licensed supplier.

### Keep the identification tag attached to the container.

The tag shows where they were harvested. Record the first and last day the shellfish were served. Keep the tag for 90 days.



## Wild Harvested Mushrooms

Wild harvested mushrooms also need source identification. Keep the source information for 90 days.

## Food Deliveries

Always check food when it is delivered.

### Make sure:

- Food is not spoiled.
- Cans are not dented or damaged.
- Packages are sealed.
- Cold food is 41°F or below.
- Frozen food is frozen.
- Food is in good condition.

Only accept delivery when you can check the food.

# Food Allergies

Some foods can cause an allergic reaction. Food allergies can be very serious. In some cases, an allergic reaction is life-threatening.

## An allergic reaction can cause:

- A tingling sensation
- Hives
- Vomiting
- Face, tongue, or throat swelling
- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of consciousness or death

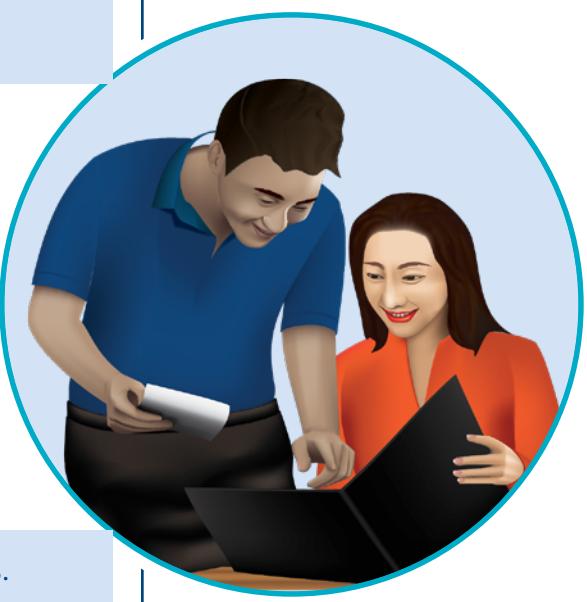
Call 911 and get medical help immediately if someone has an allergic reaction.

## It is important to know what ingredients your establishment uses.

Customers may ask you about ingredients so they can avoid them. People with allergies must avoid foods with that ingredient. Even a small amount can make someone very ill.

Example   | Someone allergic to eggs must avoid cake, pasta, and mayonnaise.

Don't guess. Ask the chef about food ingredients.



## Keep it separate.

Tell the chef if a customer reports a food allergy. Gloves, utensils, equipment, and surfaces can all transfer allergens to other food.

## Top food allergens:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Fish
- Tree nuts
- Wheat
- Peanuts
- Soybeans
- Shellfish
- Sesame

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# Clean and Sanitize

## Cleaning and sanitizing are not the same.

**Cleaning** uses soap and water to get rid of food, dirt, and grease.

Surfaces may look clean and still have germs you can't see.

**Sanitizing** uses chemicals or heat to kill germs.

### Approved sanitizers:

- Chlorine bleach
- Quaternary ammonium
- Iodine

Other sanitizers are available.

## Always follow instructions on the label.



### Always measure when mixing sanitizer.

Do not add soap. Soap prevents sanitizer from killing germs. A common sanitizer is 1 teaspoon of bleach per gallon of water.



### Check sanitizer strength.

Use test strips to make sure sanitizer is the right strength.



### Use separate sanitizers.

Sanitize surfaces before and after you prepare raw meat and ready to eat food.



### Store wiping cloths in sanitizer.

This stops germs from growing on the cloth.

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### Make sanitizer often.

It stops working over time. Change sanitizer if it becomes dirty or cloudy.

Wash, rinse, and sanitize utensils and equipment after use.  
Always store them clean and sanitized.

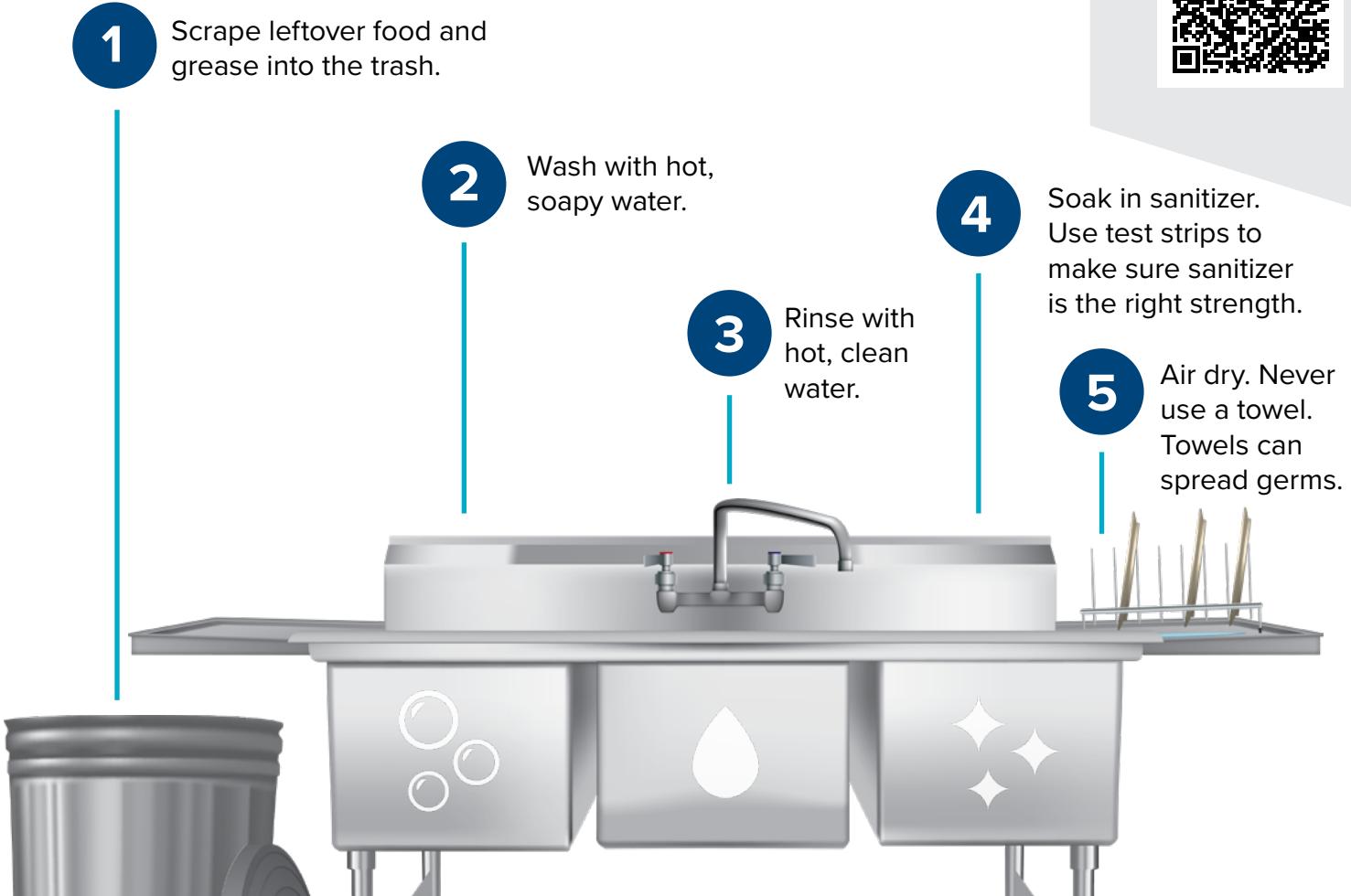
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# Dishwashing

Clean and sanitize dishes, utensils, and equipment. Wash dishes by hand in a 3-compartment sink or with a dishwasher.

## Follow these steps:



### Dishwasher tips:

- Scrape leftover food and grease into the trash.
- Dishwashers use heat or chemicals to sanitize. Use test strips to make sure it is sanitizing correctly.
- Air dry dishes before you put them away.

### Prep tables and large equipment

Not everything fits in a dishwasher or 3-compartment sink.

#### Steps to clean and sanitize other equipment:

1. Scrub with hot, soapy water.
2. Rinse with clean water.
3. Wipe on sanitizer with a clean cloth.
4. Allow to air dry.

Clean and sanitize often.



*Clean surfaces that touch food every 4 hours. Don't wait until the end of the day.*

# Vomit and Diarrhea Cleanup

Cleaning vomit and diarrhea is different than regular cleaning. You can get sick or spread illness to others if you don't clean the right way.

## Food establishments need written procedures.

Food workers must know and follow these procedures to keep germs from spreading to people, equipment, or food.

## Clean up vomit and diarrhea quickly.

### A good plan will include:

1. Move customers and employees away.
2. Block off the area.
3. Wear disposable gloves, face mask, shoe covers, and a disposable gown.
4. Wipe up with paper towels and place into a garbage bag.
5. Use soapy water to clean.
6. Disinfect with an approved disinfectant.
7. Throw away any food and disposable items in the area.
8. Germs can spread a long way. Clean and sanitize equipment and utensils within 25 feet.
9. Throw away or sanitize anything used to clean. Discard sanitizer.
10. Take trash to the dumpster immediately.
11. Thoroughly wash your hands and arms afterward.
12. Go home and take a shower if possible.

If a food worker is sick, send them home until they are symptom-free for 24 hours.

## Choose the right disinfectant.

- A disinfectant is different than a sanitizer.
- Do not use your kitchen sanitizer.
- Choose a disinfectant that kills norovirus.
- Follow the directions on the label.



Don't have kitchen staff clean, when possible.

# Food Protection

It is important to protect food from contamination. Eating, drinking, smoking, or personal items can contaminate food.

## Tips to protect food:

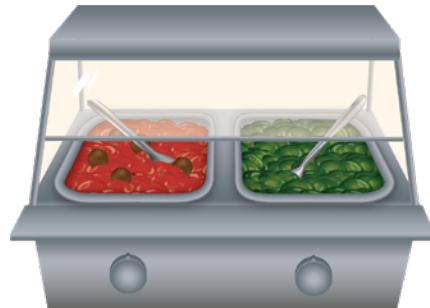
- Eat or drink away from food and food preparation areas.
- Do not smoke, vape, or use tobacco in the kitchen.
- Drink from a covered container. Store it where it won't spill onto food or work surfaces.
- Keep hair tied back, short, or covered with a hair net.
- Do not wear jewelry. You may wear a single ring or wedding set covered by a glove.
- Store personal items, like cellphones or coats, away from food preparation areas.
- Only keep necessary medications in the food establishment.
- Label medications. Store them away from food and food preparation areas.
- Keep refrigerated medication in a leakproof container. Label the container.
- Limit personal food. Label and store it where it cannot contaminate customer food.

Wash your hands after handling personal items.

## Protect food in salad bars and buffets.

### Provide:

- Separate utensils for each item.
- Clean plates for each trip to a salad bar or buffet.
- Sneeze guards.
- An employee to monitor the food.



*Protect self-service food. Use condiment dispensers or single-use packets.*

## Never re-serve food.

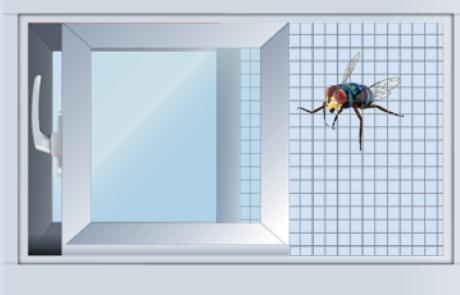
Throw away any food the customer leaves behind, like tortilla chips or breadsticks. You may re-serve unopened and packaged food, like crackers or sugar.

## Keep food safe.

- Never store food outside.
- Lock unattended refrigerators and storage areas.
- Be alert. Immediately report potential food tampering.

# Pest Control

Pests like flies, cockroaches, and mice spread germs.



## Don't let pests in.

Keep doors and windows shut or screened.  
Cover holes where pests can enter.



## Clean regularly and keep food covered.

Pests are always looking for a meal. Keep areas including floors and walls clean and dry. If pests can't find anything to eat or drink, they usually don't stay.

## Use garbage cans with tight fitting lids.

Keep garbage areas clean.

## Look for signs of pests like droppings or chewed packaging.

If you have a pest problem, contact a licensed specialist. Never use homestyle pesticides.

It is easier to keep pests out than it is to get rid of them.

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# Emergencies

Some situations make it unsafe to prepare or serve food. You may need to close until the problem is fixed.

## Contact the health department for help with:

- A power outage
- No hot water or no water at all
- A sewage back-up
- A fire
- A flood
- A refrigerator or walk-in not keeping food cold
- Important equipment not working
- Chemical contamination
- A possible foodborne illness outbreak
- An employee that vomits or has diarrhea at work
- Anything that makes it difficult to safely prepare food



## After an emergency food may not be safe to serve.

Check the food. Throw it away when it:

- Has been contaminated
- Warmed above 41°F
- Cooled below 135°F

When in doubt, throw it out.

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code with  
phone to watch  
video online.



Your local health department is your partner in food safety. Call them when you have questions.

## **Welcome to the food safety team in Washington State.**

Developed in cooperation with Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.