

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Winter 2015 (Dec./Jan./Feb.)

Unknown Food Sources



One of the most important responsibilities of a retail food establishment is to know where its food is coming from. Foods must be purchased from a known, reputable source which is in compliance with applicable State and local laws and regulations. Purchasing from vendors that prepare foods in private homes or non-licensed kitchens cannot be sold in a retail food establishment. It is important that retail food establishments keep all food related receipts in a file in the event of an **emergency**.



Cartoon Courtesy of Somerset County Health Department Food Defense Initiative.

Food Labeling Tips



1. All food items that have been taken out of their original container must be labeled with a common name.
2. Ready to eat foods can be stored for 7 days when held under refrigeration temperatures of 41°F or below. Foods inside the refrigerator must be labeled with a "Use By" date starting on the day it was made.



3. * Foods that are packaged for retail sale must be labeled with:
 - a. a name that identifies the food item (banana pudding, potato salad, etc.)
 - b. the amount of food in the container (lb, oz, etc.)
 - c. list of ingredients by weight starting with the most to least
 - d. name and address of the manufacturer, packer or distributor
 - e. name of all top food allergens (*Eggs, Fish, Milk, Peanuts, Shellfish, Soy, Tree Nuts, Wheat*)

**Note: This is a guide for basic food labeling.*

Employee Best Practices

According to Chapter 24 (N.J.A.C. 8:24) "Sanitation in Retail Food Establishments and Food and Beverage Vending Machines", "Food employee" means an individual working with unpackaged food, food equipment or utensils, or food-contact surfaces. Food employees are required to follow these practices.

- Employee personal care items cannot be stored with food or food equipment. Establishment must designate lockers or other suitable facilities for the storage of employee's personal items.
- Food employees shall not wear fingernail polish or artificial fingernails when working with exposed food, unless wearing intact gloves in good repair.
- Food employees experiencing persistent sneezing, coughing, or a runny nose that causes discharges from the eyes, nose, or mouth shall not work with exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens, or unwrapped single-service or single-use articles.
- Food employees may not wear jewelry on their arms and hands while preparing food. This subsection does not apply to a plain ring such as a wedding band.
- Food employees shall wear clean outer clothing to prevent contamination of food, equipment, utensils, linens, and single-service and single-use articles.
- Food employees shall wear hair restraints such as hats, hair coverings or nets, beard restraints, and clothing to cover body hair, designed and worn to effectively keep their hair from contacting exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens, and unwrapped single-service and single-use articles.
- A food employee may drink from a closed beverage container if the container is handled to prevent contamination of the employee's hands, the container, exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens, and unwrapped single-service and single-use articles.
- A food employee may not use a utensil more than once to taste food that is to be sold or served.



Food Safety Myths Exposed

Common myths about food safety

Myth #1: Food poisoning isn't that big of a deal. I just have to tough it out for a day or two and then it's over.

Fact: Many people don't know it, but some foodborne illnesses can actually lead to long-term health conditions, and 3,000 Americans a year die from foodborne illness.

Myth #2: It's OK to thaw meat on the counter. Since it starts out frozen, bacteria isn't really a problem.

Fact: Actually, bacteria grow surprisingly rapidly at room temperatures, so the counter is never a place you should thaw foods.

Myth #3: When cleaning my kitchen, the more bleach I use, the better. More bleach kills more bacteria, so it's safer for my family.

Fact: There is no advantage to using more bleach than needed. To clean kitchen surfaces effectively, use just one teaspoon of liquid, unscented bleach to one quart of water.

Myth #4: I don't need to wash fruits or vegetables if I'm going to peel them.

Fact: Because it's easy to transfer bacteria from the peel or rind you're cutting to the inside of your fruits and veggies, it's important to wash all produce, even if you plan to peel it.

Myth #5: To get rid of any bacteria on meat, poultry, or seafood, I should rinse off the juices with water first.

Fact: Actually, rinsing meat, poultry, or seafood with water can increase your chance of food poisoning by splashing juices (and any bacteria they might contain) onto your sink and counters. The best way to cook meat, poultry, or seafood safely is to make sure you cook it to the right temperature.

Myth #6: If I really want my produce to be safe, I should wash fruits and veggies with soap or detergent before I use them.

Fact: In fact, it's best not to use soaps or detergents on produce since these products can linger on foods and are not safe for consumption. Using clean running water is the best way to wash produce safely.

Myth #7: Leftovers are safe to eat until they smell bad.

Fact: The kinds of bacteria that cause food poisoning do not affect the look, smell, or taste of food. To be safe, use our Safe Storage Times chart to make sure you know the right time to throw food out. Chart found at <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/storagetimes.html>

Myth #8: Once food is cooked, all the bacteria have been killed, so I don't need to worry once it's "done."

Fact: Actually, the possibility of bacterial growth increases after cooking, because the drop in temperature allows bacteria to thrive. This is why keeping cooked food warmed to the right temperature is critical for food safety.

Myth #9: Marinades are acidic, which kills bacteria, so it's OK to marinate foods on the counter.

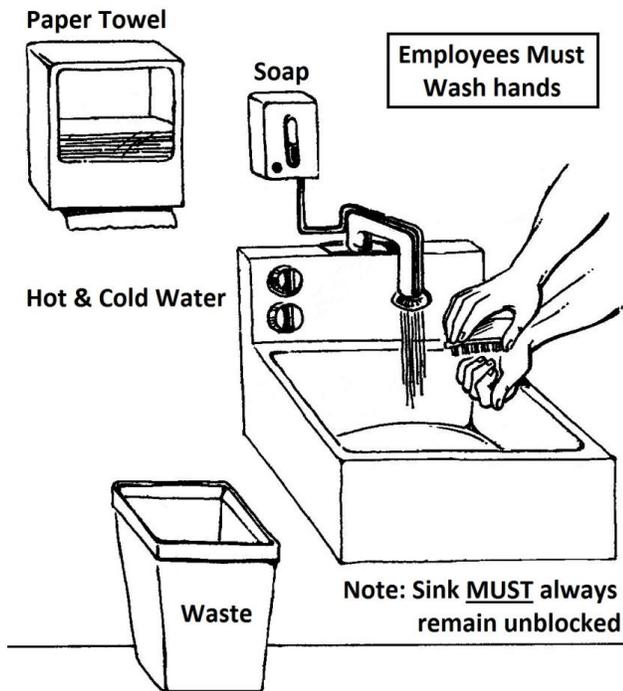
Fact: Even in the presence of acidic marinade, bacteria can grow very rapidly at room temperatures. To marinate foods safely, it's important to marinate them in the refrigerator.

Works Cited

Foodsafety.gov. (n.d.). *Food Safety Myths Exposed*. Retrieved November 18, 2014, from Foodsafety.gov: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/basics/myths/>

Hand Wash Sink Requirements

HAND WASH SINK



1. Disposable Paper Towels
2. Hand Soap
3. Hot & Cold Water
4. Waste Basket
5. Employees must wash hands sign.
6. Sink must always remain accessible for employees.
7. Must be maintained clean and in good repair.
8. Sink may only be used for hand washing.

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