

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Spring 2015 (March/April/May)

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Keep food and people safe



### What is a Foodborne illness?

It is a very common and preventable illness that makes people sick from consuming contaminated foods or drinks. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in six Americans get sick due to foodborne illness. There are more than 250 types of foodborne diseases. Some are bacterial such as salmonella and listeria, and some are viral like Hepatitis C. It is very important that Food Retail Establishments practice food safety at all times to prevent people from getting sick. **The Englewood Health Department is always here to help with any concerns that you may have regarding food safety.**

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/facts.html>



## Cleanliness Helps Prevent Foodborne Illness

Spring has long been the time of year for annual cleaning projects around our homes. However, when it comes to safe food handling, everything that comes in contact with food must be kept clean all year long.

Cleanliness is a major factor in preventing foodborne illness. Everything that touches food should be clean. Listed below are steps we can take to help prevent foodborne illnesses.

1. Wash hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds:
  - before and after handling food
  - after using the bathroom
  - after changing a diaper
  - after handling pets
  - after tending to a sick person
  - after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
  - after handling uncooked eggs or raw meat, poultry, or fish and their juices.
2. If your hands have any kind of skin abrasion or infection, always use clean disposable gloves. Wash hands (gloved or not) with warm, soapy water.
3. Thoroughly wash with hot, soapy water all surfaces that come in contact with raw meat, poultry, fish, and eggs before moving on to the next step in food preparation. Consider using paper towels to clean kitchen surfaces. If you use dishcloths, wash them often in the hot cycle of your washing machine. Keep other surfaces, such as faucets and counter tops, clean by washing with hot, soapy water.
4. To keep cutting boards clean, wash them in hot, soapy water after each use; then rinse and air or pat dry with clean paper towels. Cutting boards can be sanitized with a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Flood the surface with the bleach solution and allow it to stand for several minutes; then rinse and air or pat dry with clean paper towels.

Non-porous acrylic, plastic, glass, and solid wood boards can be washed in a dishwasher (laminated boards may crack and split). Even plastic boards wear out over time. Once cutting boards become excessively worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves, replace them.
5. Don't use the same platter and utensils that held the raw product to serve the cooked product. Any bacteria present in the raw meat or juices can contaminate the safely cooked product. Serve cooked products on clean plates, using clean utensils and clean hands.
6. When using a food thermometer, it is important to wash the probe after each use with hot, soapy water before reinserting it into a food.
7. Keep pets, household cleaners, and other chemicals away from food and surfaces used for food.
8. When picnicking or cooking outdoors, take plenty of clean utensils. Pack clean, dry, and wet and soapy cloths for cleaning surfaces and hands.



Because bacteria are everywhere, cleanliness is a major factor in preventing foodborne illness. By keeping everything clean that comes in contact with food, consumers can be assured they are helping to do their part to **Be Food Safe**.

# Produce Safety

## Buy Right

**You can help keep produce safe by making wise buying decisions at the grocery store.**

- ✓ Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged.
- ✓ When selecting pre-cut produce — such as a half watermelon or bagged salad greens — choose only those items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- ✓ Bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately from meat, poultry and seafood products when packing them to take home from the market.



## Store Properly

**Proper storage of fresh produce can affect both quality and safety.**

- ✓ Store perishable fresh fruits and vegetables (like strawberries, lettuce, herbs, and mushrooms) in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40°F or below. If you're not sure whether an item should be refrigerated to maintain quality, ask your grocer.
- ✓ Refrigerate all produce that is purchased pre-cut or peeled to maintain both quality and safety.



## Separate for Safety

**Keep fruits and vegetables that will be eaten raw separate from other foods such as raw meat, poultry or seafood — and from kitchen utensils used for those products. Take these steps to avoid cross-contamination:**

- ✓ Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils and counter tops with soap and hot water between the preparation of raw meat, poultry and seafood products and the preparation of produce that will not be cooked.
- ✓ If you use plastic or other non-porous cutting boards, run them through the dishwasher after use.



## Prepare Safely

**When preparing any fresh produce, begin with clean hands. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water *before and after* preparation.**

- ✓ Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruits and vegetables before preparing and/or eating. Produce that looks rotten should be discarded.
- ✓ Wash all produce thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting or cooking. This includes produce grown conventionally or organically at home, or purchased from a grocery store or farmer's market. Washing fruits and vegetables with soap or detergent or using commercial produce washes is not recommended.
- ✓ Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating, it is still important to wash it first so dirt and bacteria aren't transferred from the knife onto the fruit or vegetable. Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.
- ✓ Dry produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present.

## What About Pre-Washed Produce?

Many pre-cut, bagged, or packaged produce items like lettuce are pre-washed and ready-to-eat. If so, it will be stated on the packaging. If the package indicates that the contents are pre-washed and ready-to-eat, you can use the produce without further washing.

If you do choose to wash a product marked “pre-washed” or “ready-to-eat,” be sure to use safe handling practices to avoid any cross contamination.



## License Renewal Time is Here

Attention Englewood Food Establishment Owners:

As you are aware, your food license must be renewed every year. Please note that your 2014 Food License will expire on March 31, 2015. Renewal notices were sent to establishments and/or establishment owners. As a

courtesy, a copy of the new license application is available on line at [cityofenglewood.org](http://cityofenglewood.org), in “[Applications and Forms](#)”

under the Health Department tab. Feel free to mail the application with payment or come into the department directly.

Licenses must be renewed by April 1, 2015 to avoid the late fee as there will be no exceptions. Establishments that fail to license by April 10<sup>th</sup> will automatically be issued a summons.

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