

Food Allergies

Food allergies are a common and serious health problem. Any food can trigger an allergic reaction, though some foods cause the vast majority of negative reactions. Eight foods account for 90 percent of all food allergies: milk, shellfish, fish, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts (like walnuts and cashews), and eggs. Latex, from gloves worn by food service staff, may come into contact with food. For those with a latex allergy, this may cause an allergic reaction when the food is eaten. Those with a latex allergy should ask that food preparers not wear latex gloves when preparing their meals.

- Approximately 327,000 New Jerseyans suffer from food allergies, including nearly 100,000 children.
- Food allergy is the leading cause of anaphylaxis (a sudden, severe, potentially fatal, systemic allergic reaction), accounting for an estimated 30,000 emergency department visits, 2,000 hospitalizations, and 200 deaths nationwide each year.
- Currently the only way to treat food allergies is avoiding the foods that trigger reactions, so consumers should take precautionary steps, especially when eating out.

The following tips are useful for food establishment staff:

- **Take customer requests seriously**
 - Listen carefully
 - Tell the chef about the food allergy
 - Report back to the customers how you can meet their needs
- **Check for Allergen Every Time**
 - Check recipes and food labels – Food products may change
 - Beware of allergens hiding in foods like sauces, soups, dressings, and oil
- **Stop Cross Contamination**
 - Keep orders allergen-free from start to finish
 - Start fresh – clean hands, gloves, workspace, utensils, pans and dishes
 - Double check orders before serving – serve only if allergen free



Restaurant Cleaning Made Easy!

The cleanliness of a kitchen's exhaust system is one of the assessment criteria in the grading system for food establishments. Maintenance of your system not only keeps it functioning at its best, but it will produce a cleaner, cooler kitchen and better working environment for your staff.

The hood, grease trap, fan duct, or any other equipment shall be cleaned to remove grease or oily sludge. The frequency of cleaning should adhere to this schedule, which depends on your establishment's volume of cooking.

Type or Volume of Cooking	Recommended Cleaning Frequency
Wood-burning or charcoal-burning stoves, Char broilers, 24-hour restaurants	Every Month
Many hamburger restaurants and fast food locations	Every 3 Months
Moderate volume restaurants, employee cafeteria and hotel or hospital kitchens	Every 6 Months
Low volume cooking operations such as pizza places, or small snack bars	Every 12 Months

Kitchen exhaust cleaning is a standard part of the routine maintenance of any cooking establishment. All kitchen managers and restaurant owners should be aware of its role in fire prevention as well as improved ventilation for smoke and odor removal and ensure it is done on a regular basis. **** There should be ABSOLUTELY NO dumping of grease into the storm drains. Dumping of grease into storm drains pollutes our waterways and groundwater. ****



Tobacco Age of Sale Law

We would like to remind our store merchants who sell tobacco products about the current law in effect regarding the sale of tobacco products to minors. Selling tobacco products is part of your job, but it is against the law to sell tobacco products to persons under the age of **19** years. To avoid illegal sales, routinely follow the “LOOK, SEE, CHECK ID” procedure outlined below whenever selling tobacco products.

It is important for store owners to comply with the law in order to avoid a summons and court fines. The store owner is liable to **\$250** for the first violation, **\$500** for the second violation and **\$1000** for the third and each subsequent violation. There is also a possibility, after a second violation, that the tobacco license will be revoked by the Director of the Division of Taxation.

Checklist for Tobacco Merchants



Post signs (Age-of-Sale) at the points of sale (ex. Cash registers). The sign must be in public view.



Ask for I.D. if the person looks underage. Proof anyone questionable about their age.



Store owners must have a merchant education packet in their possession, which includes the laws and sample signs. There are some available at the Health Department.



Store owners must educate all store personnel on tobacco laws. If anyone in the store sells to a minor, the store owner is responsible for paying the fines.

PREVENT THE ILLEGAL SALE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS TO MINORS!



LOOK

Directly at each and every person attempting to purchase a tobacco product over the counter or from a vending machine.



SEE

What the person looks like in detail. Do not guess someone's age. If you think the person might be under 19, request ID.



CHECK ID

And the birth date on the ID. If the person is under 19 yrs of age, or if doubt exists about the age or ID, or if the person refuses to show ID, refuse the sale.



Holiday Food Handling

Did you know that the following foodborne organisms are associated with your average holiday turkey? Salmonella Enteritis, Campylobacter jejuni, Staphylococcus aureus, & Listeria monocytogenes. These foodborne organisms can be avoided by thoroughly cooking the turkey, avoiding any possible cross contamination, and employing proper handwashing and sanitization techniques.

Food Safety is important year round, but during the holiday season it becomes increasingly important. The following recommendations will enable you to enjoy a healthier holiday season.

Thawing of Foods: The best way to thaw all frozen foods is on a tray, in its original wrapping, and in the refrigerator – NOT out at room temperature. When thawing large amounts of food, allow 24 hours per each five pounds. For example, it could take up to five days to thaw a 24-pound turkey. Microwaving is also an option, but you must remember -- if you thaw food in your microwave, you must cook it immediately thereafter. You can also thaw food under portable **running** water.

Safe Food Handling: Always wash your hands before and after handling food. Keep your kitchen, dishes and utensils clean. Serve food on clean plates or serving trays, never in the containers which raw meat juices could cross contaminate the food that is to be served.

Cook Thoroughly: If you are cooking foods ahead of time, be sure to cook foods thoroughly to safe temperatures. Cook fresh roast beef, veal, and lamb to at least 145°F for medium rare and 160°F for medium doneness. Bake whole poultry to 180°F, poultry breast to 170°F. Ground turkey and poultry should be cooked to 165°F. All other meat, fish, and ground red meats should be cooked to 160°F.

Use Shallow Containers: Divide cooked foods into shallow containers to store in the refrigerator or freezer until serving. This encourages rapid and even cooling. Reheat foods to at least 165°F. Arrange and serve food on several small platters rather than on one large platter. Keep the remaining foods hot in the oven (set at 200°F-250°F) or cold in the refrigerator until serving time. This way food will be held at a safe temperature for a longer period of time.

The Two Hour Rule: Foods should not sit at room temperature for more than two hours. Keep track of how long foods have been sitting on the table and discard foods which have been there two hours or more.

Keep Hot Foods Hot and Cold Foods Cold: Hot foods should be held at 135°F or warmer. Cold foods should be held at 41°F or colder.





Keep Mice Out

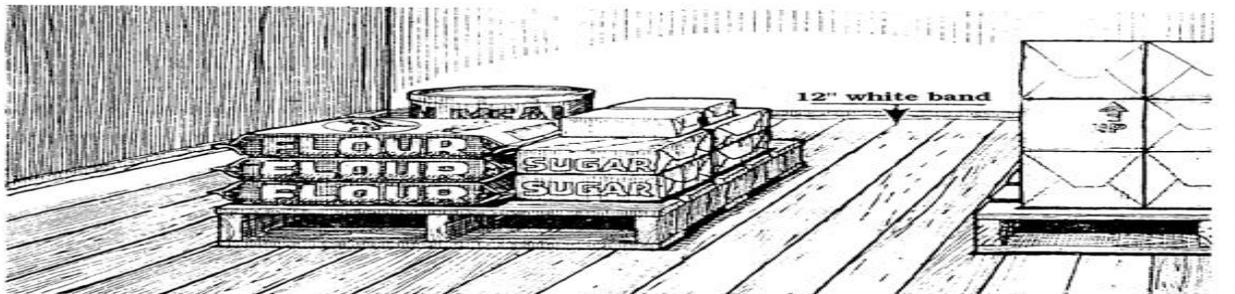
September inspires nesting in mice as well as people. Mice are looking for a winter home now, and that nice, warm kitchen would be just the spot. Mice can squeeze through ¼-inch openings; rats need a half-inch. Make sure all exterior vents are screened, and that there are no gaps underneath doors. If you are careless about leaving doors and windows open this time of year, you'll be setting mousetraps later.

Signs of Mice and Rats

Indications of mice and rats include shiny, dark colored droppings, chew markings on food containers, nests, tracks, and trails. Also look for holes where mice and rats may have chewed their way into your establishment.

Food establishments must prevent rodents from having access to food, water and shelter by:

- Removing food and garbage from the premises
- Removing a water source
- Sealing holes in your establishment
- Keep products elevated at least 6" off the ground and away from the wall



IF YOU'D LIKE TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL, PLEASE CALL US,
OR EMAIL dgreene@cityofenglewood.org
(also available on our website www.cityofenglewood.org/health.html)

Reminders

- Food Allergies are serious business. Take customer requests seriously, check for food allergens EVERY time and stop cross contamination.
- All establishments must keep their kitchens cleaned and sanitized. This includes regular kitchen exhaust system and hood cleaning on a timely basis by a certified company.
- It is unlawful to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 19.
- Keep mice out of your establishments. Make sure garbage is secured and the lids are kept tightly closed. All doors should be kept closed unless there is an acceptable method of keeping pests out (ex. self-closing screen doors and air curtains). Make sure to check for holes or cracks into your establishment and get them repaired as soon as possible.

Sources: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services – Tobacco Age of Sale Enforcement Program & National Food Safety Education, “Take Action to Prevent an Allergic Reaction.”; Foodallergy.rutgers.edu; WWW.CDC.GOV.FOODSAFETY/ORG (Holiday Tips); www.msn.com (images)

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Table of Contents

Food Allergies	p. 1
Restaurant Cleaning	p. 2
Tobacco Age of Sale	p. 3
Holiday Food Handling	p. 4
Keep Mice Out	p. 5
Reminders	p. 6

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