

10 Commandments of Food Safety

1. Use a “refrigerator thermometer” to keep your food stored at a safe temperature (below 40°F). Cold temperatures slow the growth of bacteria. Ensuring that your refrigerator temperature stays at 40°F or colder is one of the most effective ways to reduce your risk of foodborne illness.
2. Defrost food in the walk-in refrigerator, the microwave, or in the sealed package under slow running cold water, never on the counter. Perishable foods should never be thawed on the counter for longer than 2 hours because, while the center of the food may remain frozen, the outer surface may enter the Danger Zone, the range of temperatures between 40° and 140°F, in which bacteria multiply rapidly. If you’re short on time, use the microwave—or you can thaw meat and poultry in airtight packaging in cold water.
3. Always use separate cutting boards for raw meat/poultry/fish and produce/cooked foods. Bacteria from uncooked meat, poultry and fish can contaminate cooked foods and fresh produce. An important way to reduce this risk is to use separate cutting boards for raw meat/poultry/fish and produce/cooked foods.
4. Always cook meat to proper temperatures, using a calibrated instant-read thermometer to make sure. One effective way to prevent illness is to use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of meat, poultry and egg dishes. The USDA Recommended Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures are as follows: beef, veal and lamb (steaks and roasts), fish, 145°F; pork and ground beef, 160°F; poultry, 165°F.
5. Avoid unpasteurized (“raw”) milk and cheeses made from unpasteurized milk that are aged less than 60 days. Raw milk is milk from cows, sheep or goats that has not been pasteurized (heated to a very high temperature for a specific length of time) to kill harmful bacteria that may be present. These bacteria—which include salmonella, E. coli and listeria—can cause serious illness and sometimes even death. The bacteria in raw milk can be especially dangerous to pregnant women, children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems. Raw-milk cheeses aged 60 days or longer are OK, since the salt and acidity of the cheesemaking process make for a hostile environment to pathogens.
6. Never serve “runny” eggs or foods, such as cookie dough, that contain raw eggs. Even eggs that have clean, intact shells may be contaminated with salmonella, so it’s important to cook eggs thoroughly until both the yolk and the white are firm. Casseroles and other dishes containing eggs should be cooked to 160°F (use an instant-read food thermometer to check).
7. Always wash your hands in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds before handling food and after touching raw meat, poultry or eggs. You can pick up a lot of bacteria out in the world, so it’s important to always wash your hands before you eat or prepare food. You should also wash your hands after touching any uncooked meat, poultry and fish or eggs, as bacteria from these foods can contaminate cooked foods and fresh produce. Use soap and warm water and wash thoroughly—for at least 20 seconds.
8. Always heat leftover (previously cooked) foods to 165°F. The USDA recommends heating all cooked leftovers to 165°F in order to kill all potentially dangerous bacteria.
9. Never serve meat, poultry, eggs or sliced fresh fruits and vegetables that have been left out for more than 2 hours (1 hour in temperatures hotter than 90°F). If you leave perishable foods out of the walk-in refrigerator or freezer for more than 2 hours they may enter the Danger Zone—the unsafe temperatures between 40° and 140°F, in which bacteria multiply rapidly.

10. Whenever there's a food recall, check products stored at the restaurant to make sure they are safe. You should discard any food that's been recalled because it's associated with the outbreak of a food borne illness.

Proper hand washing is the single most important aspect of food safety!

Harmful bacteria, or pathogens, are found on almost everything we touch. People can carry them in or on their bodies, pick them up when handling raw food or by touching objects that have been previously contaminated. Once our hands are contaminated, it is very easy for these harmful organisms to spread to our food and cause illness. Effective hand washing prevents the spread of harmful bacteria and only requires a few simple steps:

- Wet hands with warm water.
- Apply soap to hands and lather vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Pay particular attention to fingernails, finger tips and in-between fingers.
- Rinse with warm water.
- Dry hands with disposable towels or blow dryer.

Food service personnel must wash their hands:

- Before starting work
- After using the restroom
- Before and after handling ice » [Learn More](#)
- Prior to and after using single-use gloves
- While preparing food, as often as necessary to remove excess soil
- When switching between tasks, such as preparing food and serving food
- After handling non-food items such as garbage bags or cleaning chemicals
- After touching exposed parts of the body or clothes, other than clean hands
- Between handling money and handling food, if not working solely at the register

Water is necessary.

Some hand care products claim to be effective without washing or rinsing with warm water.

Hand washing without water is not considered to effectively remove soil, grease and bacteria.

Properly Wash All Produce

Properly wash all fruits and vegetables prior to serving. All fresh produce, even organic, can harbor residual pesticides, dirt or harmful microorganisms on the surface. Washing is the only way to remove these potential health hazards as many fruits and vegetables are rarely cooked before being served.

- Wash just before serving. Washing will cause the produce to spoil faster, so it needs to be served shortly after to ensure ideal freshness.
- Use cold water. Warm water facilitates easy bacterial growth and wilts leafy vegetables.
- Rub with your hands to remove any dirt and microorganisms.
- Use a brush on hard produce. Carrots, potatoes and melons have a hard rind that will cling to dirt easily, so a vigorous washing method is required. Use only a soft bristle brush that will not tear or damage the skin.

- Throw away outer leaves. On vegetables like cabbage and lettuce these layers are the quickest to spoil and will harbor the most bacteria. -
- Always wash melons and squash. Though the skin is not eaten, bacteria can contaminate the inner flesh when sliced.
- DO NOT use detergent or bleach. Since fruits and vegetables are porous, they will absorb chemicals and can make your patrons sick.
- Place in a clean container. Using the original container will re-contaminate the vegetables and undo all of your work.
- Sanitize area when done. This will kill any germs that may have splashed onto surrounding surfaces.