



# HYGIENE

# FOOD SAFETY AND HYGIENE

All food preparation and service in school canteens must be safe and hygienic to prevent contamination.

There is a range of important aspects to consider including:

- personal hygiene
  - food handling
  - cleaning
    - food storage
    - temperature control.

Safe food handling applies to:

- receiving food
- cooking food
- packaging food
- holding and storing food
- serving food
- cleaning procedures in the canteen.



Everyone working in the canteen must have the skills and knowledge to handle food safely and prevent contamination. The canteen manager – either voluntary or paid, is responsible for safe food handling and hygienic practices in the canteen.

For more information on managing hygiene and food safety refer to pages 35-36 of the *Fresh Tastes Tool Kit*.

**All school canteens need to notify the NSW Food Authority of their contact details.**

**For more information go to [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 552 406**

# FOOD SAFETY AND HYGIENE

## Why is food safety so important?

It is estimated that more than five million Australians suffer from food-borne illness each year, and many become sick because of incorrect handling, storage and preparation.

Children are particularly vulnerable so it's essential for canteen managers to familiarise themselves with the Food Safety Standards and ensure that good food safety and hygiene practices are carried out in their canteen at all times.

## PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Wash hands thoroughly with warm soapy water and dry thoroughly;
  - before preparing food
  - after touching raw meat, fish or poultry
  - after blowing your nose
  - after using the toilet
  - after smoking
  - after handling money
  - after handling garbage
  - after a break
- Use paper towels for drying hands rather than tea towels.
- Clothes should be clean and tidy. If aprons are used they must be clean and changed at least daily.
- Long hair should be tied back. Wearing a hat can help prevent food contamination.



## Food Handling

- Food handlers do not have to wear gloves however they do need to remove or cover jewellery. If gloves are used they must be worn for one continuous task only and then discarded. In many cases it is preferable to use utensils such as tongs or spoons.
- Do not prepare food for others if you are ill, especially if you are suffering from vomiting or diarrhoea. Let your supervisor know if you are ill.
- Cuts and sores must be covered with a coloured waterproof dressing – cover this with a glove.
- Do not eat while preparing food. Use a clean utensil if you need to taste your cooking.
- Do not blow into bags to open before filling.
- Wash fruit and vegetables before use.
- Keep raw and cooked food well separated during preparation and don't use the same utensils for both, especially cutting boards.



## Cleaning

- Clean out refrigerators weekly.
- Always wash utensils, bench tops and cutting boards with hot water and detergent before and after preparing food and after touching raw meat, poultry and fish.
- Sanitise bench tops after washing and allow to air dry.
- Empty garbage bins daily. Line the bin and always keep the lid on.
- Sweep and mop floors daily.
- Ensure premises are free from vermin (including flies and cockroaches).

## Temperature Control

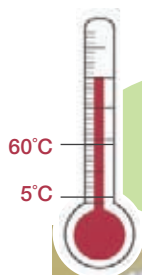
Bacteria that commonly cause food poisoning grow rapidly between 5°C and 60°C – this is commonly referred to as the ‘temperature danger zone’.



**TIP** Prepare the serving portion of hot foods such as soups and cup noodles in advance to prevent scalds and burns, especially for young children.

## To Keep Food Safe:

- Don't leave perishable foods in the ‘temperature danger zone’ for longer than 2 hours.
- Keep hot food out of the ‘temperature danger zone’ by keeping it above 60°C in an oven, food warmer or on the stove top until ready to serve.
- Use a heat process that rapidly heats food to 60°C or above.
- Cook meat and poultry until well done, right through to the centre. No pink should be visible and juices should run clear.
- Keep cold food, including raw meat, poultry and perishables in the refrigerator or freezer, below 5°C until you are ready to cook or serve.
- Defrost frozen foods overnight in the refrigerator or in the microwave – never defrost foods on the bench top, in the sink or in the sun.
- Refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible and always within 2 hours. If reheating leftovers, reheat to steaming hot.



Well covered/wrapped salads and sandwiches can be removed from the refrigerator prior to serving in order to display on the counter. Ensure that they do not remain in the danger zone for more than 2 hours.



## Food Storage

- Store sandwiches in the refrigerator after preparation (ie. below 5°C).
- Store cooked food on upper and raw meat on lower shelves of the refrigerator to prevent meat drippings contaminating other food.
- Store frozen food at –15°C.
- Date, label and cover perishable products in refrigerator.
- Rotate stock and check use-by-dates. If in doubt, throw it out!
- Keep all food covered when on display or in storage.
- Never refreeze defrosted frozen foods.
- Store chemicals and cleaning agents well away from food. Never store chemicals in used food or drink containers.



## HELPFUL RESOURCES

For more information about food safety and hygiene contact:

- The NSW Food Authority  
[www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 552 406
- Safe Food Australia  
[www.foodstandards.gov.au/mediareleasespublications/publications/safefoodaustralia2nd519.cfm](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/mediareleasespublications/publications/safefoodaustralia2nd519.cfm)

Another great resource is the “Looking after our kids” video and handbook produced by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing in 2002. This was distributed to all schools in 2002. Look for this in your school. Additional copies are no longer available.

