Northwest Health Connections

Food Safety: Basic Guidelines

Foodborne Illness, also called food poisoning, is common, distressing, and sometimes life-threatening. That is why it is very important to take steps to prevent food poisoning. Remember that you can't taste (or smell or see) the bacteria that cause food poisoning. Tasting only a tiny amount can cause serious illness. Best if you're in doubt to throw it out!

Causes of Foodborne Illness:

- Cross contamination

- Leaving cooked food unrefrigerated

- Improper food preparation

Prevention is key to fighting bacteria:

- Good hand washing

- Keep it clean

- Separate—don't cross contaminate

- Chilling—proper refrigeration

- Keeping it hot

- Keeping it cool

- Thawing properly

- If in doubt, throw it out

References: Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, www.foodsafety.gov

Rule #1 CLEAN

Bacteria can survive in many places around your kitchen, not only on surfaces but also utensils and your hands.

Helpful hints:

- Good hand washing is first and foremost! Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with hot running water and soap.

- Make sure you wash surfaces and utensils immediately after every use with hot soapy water to prevent cross contamination with other foods.

- Bacteria can get into crevasses of cutting boards, so don't forget to replace them when they start to get worn. Use one cutting board for fresh produce, and one for raw meat, poultry, or seafood.

- **DO NOT** wash raw meat and poultry. Washing raw meat and poultry can actually help spread bacteria, because their juices may splash onto (and contaminate!) your sink and countertops.

- All commercial eggs are washed before sale. Any extra handling of the eggs, such as washing, may actually increase the risk of cross-contamination, especially if the shell becomes cracked.

- Fruits and vegetables need to be washed before you cut into them, if not you may spread the bacteria from the outside to the inside.

- Periodically sanitize your surfaces with a solution of one quart of water and one teaspoon of chlorine bleach.

Rule #2
SEPARATE

Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other foods.
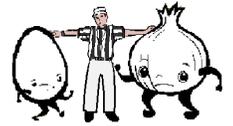
Cross-contamination can occur if you don't keep things separated.
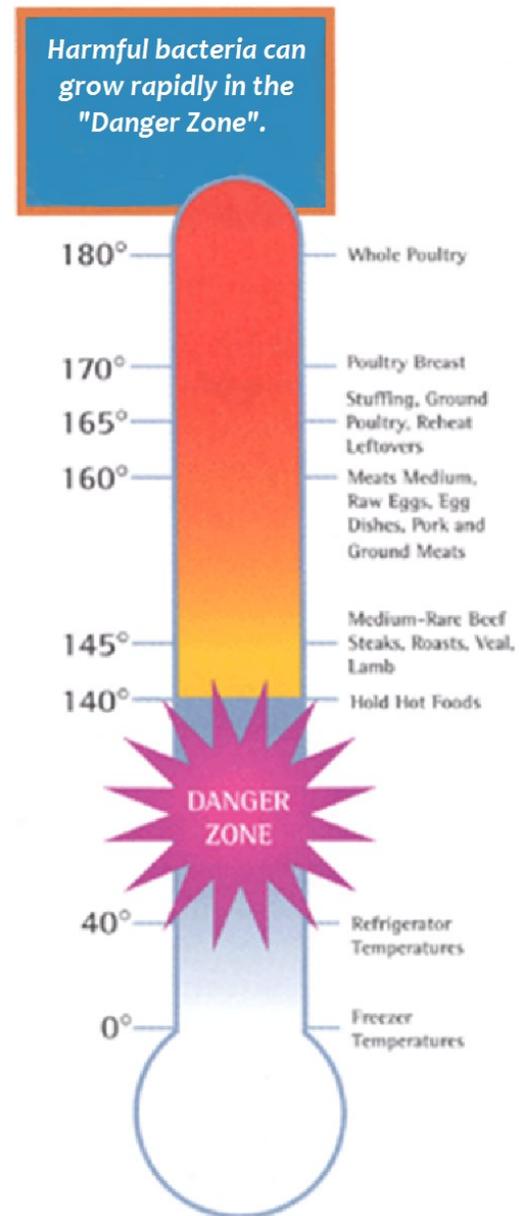
Helpful hints:

- Use separate plates and utensils for cooked and raw foods.

- Don't place food that is ready to eat on a surface that has held raw meat, poultry or seafood.

- Keep in mind that cross-contamination can also occur at the grocery store if you should mix meats, poultry, seafood and eggs.

- Bacteria can also spread inside your refrigerator if the juices of raw meat should happen to drip onto foods that are already prepared and ready-to-eat.
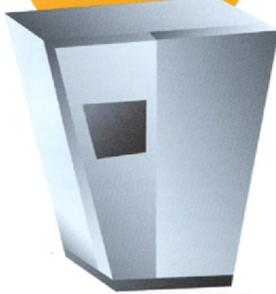
Rule #3
COOK

Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria

The "Danger Zone" is between 40° F and 140 °F: this is when bacteria multiplies the quickest that can cause food poisoning.

Helpful hints:

- Make sure you cook your food to a high enough temperature to kill off the bacteria.

- Bacterial growth increases as the food cools, so keep your food above the safe temperature of 140°F.

- Don't place meat that has been cooked back on a plate that has held raw meat, unless you have washed the plate with hot soapy water.

Harmful bacteria can grow rapidly in the "Danger Zone".

180°	— Whole Poultry
170°	— Poultry Breast
165°	— Stuffing, Ground Poultry, Reheat Leftovers
160°	— Meats Medium, Raw Eggs, Egg Dishes, Pork and Ground Meats
145°	— Medium-Rare Beef Steaks, Roasts, Veal, Lamb
140°	— Hold Hot Foods

DANGER ZONE

| 40° | — Refrigerator Temperatures |
| 0° | — Freezer Temperatures |

Rule #4
CHILL

Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from growing.

Growth of bacteria slows with cold temperatures. It is important to refrigerate food promptly and properly.

Helpful hints:

- Make sure your fridge is between 40° F and 32°F; your freezer should be 0° F or below.

- Chill food properly, cold air must be allowed to circulate in the fridge. Don't over stuff!

- Perishable food needs to be refrigerated within two hours. In the summer months cut this time down to one hour.

- Foods that need cold (such as eggs) should be kept at the back of the refrigerator.

- Foods that can tolerate warmer temperatures (such as ketchup), should be kept on the door or at the front of the refrigerator.

- Keep meats on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator—in case of leakage.

- Keep fruits and vegetables in the drawer—to prevent excessive moisture and to prolong their storage life.

All food service establishments are required to follow food safety guidelines set by State and local health officials.

Shopping Tips

- Shop for perishables (such as meat) last.

- Place raw meats and poultry in separate plastic bags to prevent the meat from cross contaminating foods that will be eaten without further cooking.

- Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged.

- Do not purchase food if the package is torn or damaged.

- When buying frozen products make sure they are solidly frozen.

- Keep refrigerated and frozen items together so they will remain cold until you get home.
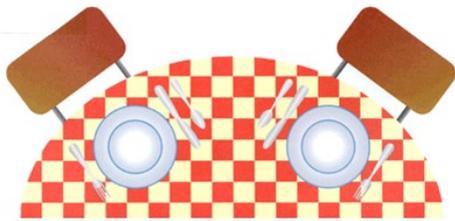
Food Safety Test

You must submit your completed test, with at least a score of 80%, to receive **1/2 hour** of training credit for this course.

* To submit via fax, please fax the test and evaluation to 814-728-8887. Please fax only the test and evaluation, not the entire training packet.

* To submit via email, please send an email to training@northwesthc.org. Please put "Food Safety Test" in the subject line, and the numbers 1—5, along with your answers, in the body of the email.

* To submit via mail, send the test and evaluation pages to NWHC, 247 Hospital Drive, Warren PA 16365.

1. Basic food safety rules are clean, separate, cook and chill?   True   False

2. Cross-contamination only occurs at home?   True   False

3. Thawing food is the safest if done in the refrigerator?   True   False

4. When grocery shopping you should purchase meat first?   True   False

5. Danger Zone temperatures are between 40 ° F and 140° F?   True   False

Name: _____Role/Title: _____

Agency: _____Date: _____

Please provide contact information (email address, fax number, or mailing address) where you would like your certificate to be sent:

_____

_____

_____

NORTHWEST HEALTH CONNECTIONS
A DIVISION OF MILESTONE CENTERS, INC.
EVALUATION OF TRAINING

Training Title: Food Safety   Date: _____

☐ Direct Support Professional   ☐ Provider Administrator/Supervisor

☐ Program Specialist   ☐ Provider Clinical Staff

☐ Consumer/Self-Advocate   ☐ Family Member

☐ Support Coordinator   ☐ Support Coordinator Supervisor

☐ PCH Staff/Administrator   ☐ County MH/MR/IDD

☐ FLP/LSP   ☐ Other (please list): _____

Please circle your PRIMARY reason for completing this home-study training:

☐ It's mandatory   ☐ interested in subject matter   ☐ need training hours   ☐ convenience

Please circle the best response to each question.

5 = Strongly Agree   4 = Agree   3 = Undecided   2 = Disagree   **1 = Strongly Disagree**

1.	As a result of this training, I have increased my knowledge.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	I learned something I can use in my own situation.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	This training provided needed information.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	The training material was helpful and effective.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Overall, I am satisfied with this training.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	I am glad I completed this training.	5	4	3	2	1

Suggestions for improvement: _____

_____

_____

Additional information I feel should have been included in this training: _____

_____

_____

I would like to see these topics/conditions developed into home-study trainings: _____

_____

_____