

## Food Safety Guidelines<sup>1</sup>

The best way for an organization to ensure food safety is to become Food Safe certified. For more information see <http://www.foodsafe.ca> or contact your Health Authority.

### Personal Food Safety

- When preparing food, adults must have clean clothes and aprons, with hair controlled.
- Recreation staff or volunteers with infected cuts or suffering from diarrhea or vomiting must never handle foods.

### Washing Vegetables and Fruit

Fresh vegetables and fruit come with unique safety challenges. While there is legitimate concern about the potential for E. coli, salmonella or other bacteria poisoning, and about pesticide residues left on produce, *eating lots of vegetables and fruit far outweighs such risks.*

You can limit the amount of bacteria and pesticide residues by:

- Washing your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with hot water and soap before and after handling fresh vegetables and fruit.
- Discarding rotten or bruised vegetables or fruit.
- Waiting until just before serving to wash the vegetables and fruit.
- Washing the produce in a sink designated for washing produce, away from potential contaminants.
- Washing the produce thoroughly in clean, cold running water that is safe enough to drink.
- Scrubbing with a clean brush to remove dirt, bacteria and pesticide residues.
- Washing thoroughly with hot water and soap all counter tops, cutting boards and utensils.
- **Not using:**
  - soap to wash vegetables or fruit, as it could be harmful to children. Soap residues can remain on the produce and can be absorbed into the body if eaten.
  - vinegar or baking soda as either can alter the taste of the produce.
  - mixtures of chlorine bleach and water to wash produce.
  - sponges because they tend to be breeding grounds for bacteria.

### Keep Cold Food Cold

- Refrigerate perishable foods promptly at temperatures below 40 degrees F (4 degrees).
- Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, in cold running water, or in the microwave if you'll be cooking it immediately.
- Don't overstuff the refrigerator or cooler/bins. Cold air needs room to circulate to keep food fresh.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: Action Schools! BC Healthy Eating and Food Services School District #36, Surrey

### **Keep Hot Foods Hot**

- Prepare food quickly and serve immediately.
- Cook to proper temperatures; internal temperatures of hamburger patties and hot dogs should be 165 degrees F (74 degrees C).
- Use a clean and sanitized thermometer to probe cooked foods; insert a thermometer into the thickest area of meat away from bone or fat.
- Once cooked, keep foods hot at 140 degrees F (60 degrees C) using chafing dishes, croc pots, warming trays, hot ovens or other hot holding equipment.

### **Separate**

*Prevent cross-contamination by:*

- Using separate plates for raw foods;
- Using clean scissors to open bags of food;
- Having different people handle cash than those working with food;
- Avoid direct contact with food as much as possible; and,
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water.

## **HANDWASHING**

### **Why worry?**

Public health experts estimate that there are 11 to 13 million cases of foodborne illness in Canada every year\*. The symptoms of food poisoning (stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea) are very unpleasant and can be very serious in children.

Many of these food poisoning incidents can be prevented by hand washing. Because the harmful bacteria isn't visible, all food handlers should wash their hands to ensure they don't pass the contaminants to the food.

### **How to thoroughly wash your hands:**

1. Rinse hands under warm, running water to remove what you can see.
2. Vigorously rub soaped hands together for at least 20 seconds, paying special attention to the areas under the fingernails and between the fingers, preferably with a soft brush.
3. Rinse the hands under warm running water to remove the lather.
4. Dry hands thoroughly because wet hands can spread bacteria.

### **When should hands be washed?**

*Hands should be thoroughly washed:*

- before preparing food;
- after going to the washroom;
- after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing;
- after touching your mouth, face or hair;
- after smoking;
- after eating;
- after handling raw meat, poultry, fish, eggs or unwashed vegetables;
- after handling dirty dishes; and,
- after touching boxes or garbage.

\* [www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/concen/cause/salmonellae.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/concen/cause/salmonellae.shtml)

**Can gloves or lotions be used for dry hands?**

Gloves, creams and lotions don't replace timely hand washing because they can become contaminated. If gloves are a factor, they must be maintained and changed frequently as tiny holes can cause the glove to leak bacteria into the food.

**What about the use of antibacterial soaps?**

With proper hand washing, plain soap is very effective at removing unwanted bacteria. Nothing can replace proper lathering and scrubbing with soap, followed by a thorough rinsing.

**Are bare hands okay when handling foods?**

Utensils (spoons, spatulas, tongs) or napkins are preferred. If you must use your hands directly, use washable serving containers when appropriate. Disposable containers or trays are more suitable if there aren't proper dishwashing facilities.