



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

SUMMER

2022 ISSUE

Thawing Frozen Foods

Freezing is a great way to preserve food and keep it safe for an extended period of time. However, it is important to properly thaw frozen foods in order to protect it and prevent contamination. According to the Texas Food Establishment Rule, potentially hazardous food must be thawed in one of several ways.



1. Under refrigeration that maintains the food temperature at 41°F or less.

2. Under cold running water

3. Or as part of a cooking process that includes heating the food to an adequate internal temperature or thawing in a microwave and then immediately transferring it to a conventional cooking oven.

It is important to note that if you choose to thaw frozen potentially hazardous food under running water, the water must be at a temperature of 70°F or below. The water must also be running hard enough to remove loose particles in an overflow. Additionally, potentially hazardous foods may not be at a temperature above 41°F for more than 4 hours. The time includes thawing under refrigeration and time exposed to running water. By properly thawing potential hazardous foods, you can protect your employees and our current customers.

For additional information visit <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/keep-food-safe.html>.

Grand Prairie

T E X A S

PUBLIC HEALTH

We're online!

www.gptx.org

Creating raving fans by delivering world class service.

In this Issue:

Microwave Ovens and Safety..... 2

Serving High Risk Population2

Food Handler Schedule.....3

Food Handler Class.....3

Excluding Employees from the Work Place..... 4

Clean Prairie.....4

Microwave Ovens and Safety

Microwaves can be a convenient and fast way to defrost food in your commercial facility, but it is important to know how to use them safely. When defrosting food in the microwave, always choose the “defrost” setting. Rotate and turn food upside down when possible while defrosting in the microwave. When thawing ground meat, remove the thawed portion off as it softens and remove it from the microwave. Continue to defrost the remaining portion. Meat, poultry, egg casseroles, and fish must be cooked immediately after defrosting in the microwave oven because some parts of the food may begin to cook during the defrost time. Do not hold the partially cooked food to use later. The safest way to defrost food is in a refrigerator. It is not as fast, but it is the safest.



Serving High Risk Population

High-risk populations are groups of individuals who are at higher risk of becoming sick as the result of a foodborne pathogen. These groups include young children, the elderly, and individuals who have weakened immune systems. If you serve any of these populations regularly, you should be taking extra steps to ensure that the food you serve them is prepared safely. Monitor temperature closely, ensuring food is kept at either below 40°F or above 135°F. This will prevent the growth of harmful food pathogens and protect at-risk populations. Hand washing is also very important and should be done every 20 minutes or whenever changing tasks, more often when serving high-risk populations. Be sure to exclude any ill persons from the workplace and clean and sanitize utensils often. By taking these steps and ensuring your employees do the same, you may help prevent someone from becoming ill.

2022 OZONE SEASON

From March - November

Look out for the following Air Quality Index.



Monitor temperature
40°F or above
135°F

Hand wash frequently
Every 20 minutes

Exclude ill employees

Clean and sanitize



2022 Food Handler Schedule

July 7	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
July 21	9:00 AM	3:30 PM*
August 4	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
August 18	9:00 AM*	3:30 PM
September 1	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
September 15	9:00 AM	3:30 PM*
October 6	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
October 20	9:00 AM*	3:30 PM
November 3	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
November 17	9:00 AM	3:30 PM*
December 1	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
December 15	9:00 AM*	3:30 PM

*Spanish only.

Pre-registration is required. Register by calling 972-237-8055.

Food Handler Class

A food handler card or certificate issued by accredited providers is required to work in the food industry in Texas and the City of Grand Prairie. Employers must ensure that all their employees have a food handler card or certificate within 60 days of hiring. The cards or certificates must be available for inspection at all times. Allowing employees to work without a food handler card or certificate is a violation of state laws and the City Code of Ordinances.

Food handler cards or certificates obtained through accredited providers are not required to be transferred to a city of Grand Prairie food handler card.

The Public Health Division offers food handler classes the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month for employees who work in the food industry. One class, the 3rd Thursday is offered in Spanish. To attend a class you must bring an identification and pay a fee of \$15.00. Call 972-237-8055 to register or obtain additional information.

For more information visit: www.gptx.org/environmentalservices.

Take the Get Fit GP pledge for a healthy lifestyle and sign up for a chance to win prizes, www.gptx.org/getfitgp.



Foodborne Pathogen in Produce

Fruits and vegetables are just small portion foods that have sickened people or even caused death when they were contaminated with foodborne pathogens such as e. coli, listeria, and salmonella. Washing fruits and vegetables is smart, but can it keep you safe from bacteria outbreaks? Unfortunately, cold water rinsing doesn't remove all of them, and that's a problem. For safe measure, the most effective way to keep produce safe is to handle it with care to minimize bruising, wash in cold water, dry off any excess water, keep produce that is supposed to be kept cold in the refrigerator (The FDA recommends a refrigerator setting of 40°F or below), and get rid of fruits and vegetables that look as if they are going bad.

For more information visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/foodborne-germs.html>.



Excluding Employees from the Work Place



**TO KEEP OUR WATER CLEAN,
MAKE SURE ONLY RAIN GOES
DOWN THE STORM DRAIN.**

**PICK UP:
• TRASH
• LEAVES
• PET WASTE**

#LOVEWATERLOVELIFE

It is important to ensure that your employees are healthy enough to safely prepare and serve food. Occasionally, there will be times when an employee must be excluded from working with or preparing food. In the State of Texas, it is the responsibility of the person in charge to require reporting by his or her employees of any diseases that are transmissible through food. Foodborne illnesses that fall under this category include Norovirus, hepatitis A virus, Salmonella Typhi, Shigella, or shiga toxin-producing E. coli. Additionally, if an employee experiences vomiting, diarrhea jaundice (yellowing of the skin and/or eyes), or sore throat with fever, that employee should not be permitted to work until cleared by a licensed physician. Employees with open sores or wounds should not work with food unless the lesion is covered by a dry, durable, tight-fitting bandage.

An employee must be excluded from working or preparing food if they show the following symptoms,

- If they are experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, or are jaundice.
- Have a sore throat with fever.
- Have a disease that is transmissible.



For more information visit: <https://www.fda.gov/media/77065/download>.

This Newsletter is a publication of:
Public Health and Environmental Services
Department

Submit your comments and suggestions to:

Editor: Werner Rodriguez

Phone: 972-237-8056

Email: Wrodriguez@gptx.org



Get Up Get Out
Get Sprayed

Get Fit GP

www.gptx.org/FightTheBite



To learn about the Clean Prairie initiative please visit: <https://www.gptx.org/About-Grand-Prairie/Green-Grand-Prairie/Clean-Prairie>