

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Fall 2017  
Issue 15



## Food Borne Illness: What You Need to Know

The United States food supply is among the safest in the world; however, the Federal government estimates that there are about 48 million cases of foodborne illness annually—the equivalent of 1 of every 6 U.S. residents getting sick yearly. Each year these illnesses result in an estimated 128,000 hospitalizations and around 3,000 deaths.

Many foodborne disease-causing organisms that frequently cause illness exists in the United States. The threats are numerous and varied, with symptoms ranging from relatively mild discomfort to very serious, life-threatening illness. While the very young, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems are at greatest risk of serious consequences from most foodborne illnesses, some of the organisms and their potential source shown below pose grave threats to all persons.

Illness	Food Sources
Botulism	Canned foods
Cyclosporiasis	Contaminated fresh produce
E. coli infection	Water or food contaminated with human feces
Hepatitis	Contaminated food and drinking water
Listeriosis	Unpasteurized dairy products and ready-to-eat deli meats
Salmonellosis	Poultry, meats and dairy products
Shigellosis	Raw produce and contaminated drinking water
Staphylococcal	Meats, potato and egg salads
Vibrio infection	Undercooked or raw seafood

## Hand Hygiene

Handwashing is a simple thing and it's the best way to prevent infection and, illness, and is a key prevention tool for food safety.

The basic rule is to wash hands before preparing food and after handling uncooked meat and poultry, before eating, after coughing, sneezing, using the restroom, or blowing one's nose into a tissue.

When washing hands:

- Wet your hands with clean running warm water and apply soap.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub for 20 seconds.
- Rinse hands well under running water and dry them using a paper towel or air dryer. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/handwashing](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing).



ENVIRONMENTAL  
QUALITY

We're online!

[www.gptx.org](http://www.gptx.org)

Creating raving fans by  
delivering world class  
service.



## In this Issue:

Ozone	2
Bare Hands Contact	2
Fight The Bite	2
Food Handler Class	3
Food Handler Class Schedule	3
Get Fit	3
Grease Trap Maintenance	3
Power Outage	4
Integrated Pest Management	4

## Ozone

The DFW area is classified as moderate nonattainment for 8-hour ozone by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). When emissions of volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides interact in the presence of sunlight, ground level ozone is formed. At high concentrations, ozone can cause damage to human health and vegetation. Approximately half of the ozone pollution in the region results from gasoline evaporation

and combustion of motor vehicle engines.

To help reduce ground ozone levels, avoid filling up your gas tank during the hottest part of the day, keep your tires inflated at the proper pressure to reduce gas consumption, and maintain your vehicle per manufacturers instructions.

For additional information on ozone, visit [www.airnorthtexas.org](http://www.airnorthtexas.org).



## Bare Hands Contact

Did you know that except when washing fruits and vegetables, food employees



may not contact exposed, ready-to-eat food with their bare hands and shall use suitable utensils such as a deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, single-use gloves, or dispensing equipment. Most foodborne outbreaks involve the fecal-oral route. The biggest contributor to spreading these agents is through bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food products. Due to poor or nonexistent handwashing policies, employees of food service establishments put the public at risk. In addition, infected cuts, burns, or boils on hands can also result in contamination of foods ready to eat.

The Health Department requires two methods of preventing the spread of foodborne disease by this mode of transfer:

- Prohibiting food workers from preparing food when they are sick with infectious diseases
- Requires thorough and frequent handwashing

Most people do not wash their hands frequently enough. And not all employees are honest with the condition of their health. As a final barrier, bare hand contact with exposed ready-to-eat food is prohibited.

For additional information, visit [www.fda.gov/food](http://www.fda.gov/food).

## Fight the Bite

Mosquitoes bite all day everyday and they need water because they live part of their lives in almost any body of water. By eliminating sites with stagnant water the potential for mosquito breeding and transmission of diseases like West Nile and Zika is reduced.

What you can do to help around your property:

- Clean rain gutters
- While outside use an EPA-approved insect repellent
- Repair leaky pipes and outdoor faucets
- Cover or turn upside down any container that may collect water
- Fill in or drain any low places (puddles, ruts)
- Keep drains, ditches, and culverts free of trash
- Keep grass cut short and shrubbery well trimmed around your property

Remember, NO standing water, No mosquitoes. Keep mosquitoes under control.

For additional information, contact the Environmental Quality Division at 972-237-8056 or visit us on-line at [www.gptx.org/fightthebite](http://www.gptx.org/fightthebite).



## 2017 Food Handler Schedule

July 6	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
July 20	9:00 AM	3:30PM*
August 3	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
August 17	9:00 AM*	3:30 PM
September 7	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
September 21	9:00 AM	3:30PM*
October 5	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
October 19	9:00 AM*	3:30 PM
November 2	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
November 16	9:00 AM	3:30PM*
December 7	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
December 21	9:00 AM*	3:30 PM

\*Spanish only.

Preregistration 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 Environmental Quality 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](http://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](http://www.gptx.org/getfitgp)



## Grease Trap Maintenance

All food service establishments in the City of Grand Prairie must pump their grease trap according to their established frequency. The pumping frequency of the grease trap is shown on the health permit issued to each facility.

When contracting services, ensure that the liquid waste hauler is permitted by the city. After the grease trap is pumped a copy of the trip ticket should be obtained by the owner/manager of the facility. All establishments must keep a copy of each pumping event for at least 2 years and must be available for inspection at all times.

For more information, please call 972-237-8055.



Environmental Services Department

Environmental Quality Division

206 W. Church St. 2nd Floor

Grand Prairie, TX 75050



This newsletter is a publication of:

Environmental Services Department

Environmental Quality Division

Submit your comments and suggestions to:

Editor: Werner Rodriguez

Phone: 972-237-8056

Fax: 972-237-8228

Email: [wrodriguez@gptx.org](mailto:wrodriguez@gptx.org)

# Power Outages



During power outages all employees should know what to do to prevent food spoilage and/or food borne illnesses. If the electric power goes off, do the following:

- Close the facility. It's not safe to operate without lights, refrigeration, ventilation, or hot water.
- Write down the time when the power outage occurred. Your food safety "time clock" starts when the power goes out.
- Begin taking regular food temperature readings.
- Have a food thermometer ready at all times.
- Check hot foods every hour and cold foods every two hours.
- Keep a time/temperature log for every item checked.
- You must throw out food that has gotten warmer than 41°F or cooler than 140°F for more than 4 hours. If the power outage is brief (under one hour) re-heat food to 165°F.

Do not serve food, do not give it to staff, family members, or shelters if the food has been in the Danger Zone.

For more information on power outage call the Environmental Quality Division at 972-237-8055.

## Integrated Pest Management

Pest control is an important part of maintaining food safety in your facility. Pests, such as rodents, cockroaches, ants, and flies, can compromise the integrity of your food and cause your establishment to appear unclean. One effective way to reduce pest infestation is by implementing Integrated Pest Management or IPM.

IPM is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices. It uses information on the life cycles of pests and their interaction with the environment, along with available pest control methods, to manage pests economically and with as little hazard as possible

to people, property, and the environment.

The easiest way to control pests and the first step in IPM is prevention. Prevent entry to your establishment by sealing off any access points from outside. Next, eliminate sources of food for pests by taking trash out regularly, cleaning often, and storing food properly. By preventing entry and eliminating food sources, you can help prevent a pest problem before it starts—and save money on pest control services. If pests become a problem, however, you must contact a licensed pest control company.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/rodent](http://www.cdc.gov/rodent).

