

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Fall 2018
Issue 17

Serving High-Risk Populations

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 41°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.

Tips for Storing Non Perishable Items

Believe it or not, non-perishable foods can be compromised. Check canned goods for damage. Can damage is shown by swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting, crushing, denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking, or opening with a manual can opener. New items that are damaged can be returned or exchanged, old items should be discarded. Also, it's never a good idea to store foods such as onions and



potatoes under the sink. Pipes can leak and damage the food product. These items should be stored in a cool dry place. Keep food away from poisons. Don't store non-perishable foods near household cleaning products and chemicals.

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Foodborne Pathogens in Produce

Fruits and vegetables are just a small portion of the types of 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



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

Washing Produce

When To Close Your Business Voluntarily

Some conditions require a permit holder to immediately cease operations to prevent food borne illnesses and to maintain integrity of the food you serve. By closing voluntarily, you may take the necessary time to make the proper changes or repairs while complying with food safety laws. The following are common conditions that require the establishment to be closed voluntarily or by order of the health department:

- Power outages. Without electricity, you cannot operate a food establishment.
- No running water. Food safety laws require running hot and cold water under pressure to operate a food business.
- Sewer backup. Sewage carries bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Close your doors and call a plumber immediately.
- Failing cooling equipment. If a cooling unit is failing, transfer the food in it to a working unit. If it is your only unit, cease operations and contact a technician to repair or replace the unit.
- Fires. Fires and soot destroy and contaminate food and food surface areas. If you had a fire, big or small, discard any food item that may have been exposed to the fire, soot, or any fire extinguishing material.
- Pests infestation. If you have a pest infestation (e.g. rodents, roaches) close immediately and contact a licensed pest control operator.

If you find any of the conditions described above, close your facility and contact the Environmental Quality Division. We can help you to determine the course of action. Do not reopen until all safe operations have been restored and the Environmental Quality Division gives you green light to re-open.

For more information contact the Environmental Quality Division at 972-237-8055.

Environmental Quality Division at 972-237-8056 or visit us on-line at www.gptx.org/fightthebite.

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

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 Rules, 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; or
3. 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. This time includes thawing under refrigeration and time exposed to running water. By properly thawing potentially hazardous foods, you can protect your employees and your customers.

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

2019 Food Handler Schedule

January 3	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
January 17	9:00 AM	3:30PM*
February 7	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
February 21	9:00 AM*	3:30 PM
March 7	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
March 21	9:00 AM	3:30PM*
April 4	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
April 18	9:00 AM*	3:30 PM
May 2	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
May 16	9:00 AM	3:30PM*
June 6	9:00 AM	3:30 PM
June 20	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 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.

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

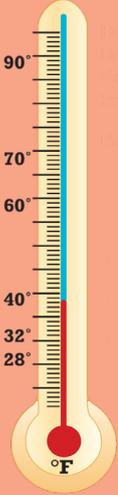


Excluding Employees from the Workplace

It is important to ensure that your employees are healthy enough to safely prepare and serve food. 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. For more information visit: <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/UCM194575.pdf>.

Microorganisms Growth Factors

All living organisms have certain criteria for growth. For microorganisms that grow in various foods, there are certain requirements they need. These microorganisms require moisture, food source, suitable time, and temperature to multiply and grow.



Temperature

Certain temperature ranges are ideal for microorganisms growth. Bacteria are divided into three groups with ideal growth temperature ranges. Psychrophilic or cold loving bacteria that are responsible for the spoilage of food grows at a range of 32-77 F with optimum temperature of 68-77 F. Mesophilic or middle range loving bacteria grow at a range of 68-110 F. Thermophilic or heat loving bacteria grow at a range of 113-158 F with optimum growth of 122-131 F.

Moisture



For each organism, the moisture needed varies. Microorganisms are composed of 80 percent water. In general, bacteria need more water than yeasts. Yeasts require more water than molds to grow.

Food

To grow and multiply, organisms need certain amount of nutrients.

Time

With favorable conditions (food/moisture/temperature) microorganisms can double in growth every 20 to 30 minutes.



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This Newsletter is a publication of:

Environmental Services Department

Environmental Quality Division

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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 additional information visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/publications/factsheets/What%20Is%20Integrated%20Pest%20Management.pdf>.

