

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Spring 2019
Issue 18

Grand Prairie
TEXAS
ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY

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Dangerous Food Mistakes

Sometimes a simple mistake can have grave consequences. What may seem like a small food safety mistake can cause serious illness with long-term consequences. When it comes to some germs, such as Salmonella, all it takes is 15 to 20 cells in undercooked food to cause food poisoning. And just a tiny taste of food with botulism toxin can cause paralysis and even death. Here are some common food safety mistakes that have been proven to cause serious illness.

#1. Tasting food to see if it's still good. You can't taste the bacteria that causes food poisoning. If it has been in the "temperature danger zone" for more than four hours discard without tasting.



#2. Putting cooked meat back on a plate that held raw meat: Bacteria will contaminate all food items.



#3. Thawing food on the counter: Germs multiply rapidly at room temperature.



#4. Washing meat or poultry: Washing raw meat or poultry can spread bacteria to your sinks, countertops, and other surfaces in your kitchen.



#5. Letting food cool too long before putting it in the fridge: Illness-causing bacteria can grow in perishable foods within two hours unless you refrigerate them.

**2
Hours**

#6. Allowing employees to work without having the proper food safety training.



#7. Marinating meat or seafood on the counter. Harmful germs in meat or seafood can multiply extremely rapidly at room temperature.



#8. Putting gloves on without washing your hands.



#9. Undercooking meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs. Cooked food is safe only after it's been cooked to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria.



#10. Not washing your hands. Germs on your hands can contaminate the food.



For more information visit: www.foodsafety.gov/keep/basics/mistakes/

Fight the Bite

Warmer weather is just around the corner and along with it comes mosquito season. Mosquitoes live part of their lives in aquatic environments and breed 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:

- Clean rain gutters free of debris and leaves
- While outside, use an EPA-approved insect repellent
- Repair leaky pipes, outdoor faucets, and ensure proper operation of sprinklers
- Fill in or drain any low places (puddles, ruts) around your facility
- Cover trash containers to keep out rain water
- Keep drains, ditches, and culverts clean of weeds and trash

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

For additional information visit us online at www.gptx.org/fightthebite

Power Outages

Power outages can occur at any time of the year and it often takes from a few hours to several days for electricity to be restored. Without electricity or a cold source, foods stored in refrigerators and freezers can become unsafe. Bacteria in food grow rapidly at temperatures between 40 and 140°F, and if these foods are consumed, people can become very sick.

To minimize the potential for foodborne illnesses due to food spoilage from power outages and other problems that are associated with severe weather events, natural or man-made disasters, you should take appropriate action:

- Make sure the freezer is at least at 32°F or below and the cooler is at 40°F or below.
- Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time.
- Contract services for mobile/portable cooling equipment in case of power outages or other emergencies.
- Keep all cooling units' doors closed as much as possible to maintain food safely cold/frozen for a few hours
- Never taste food to determine its safety!
- If the power has been out for long time, check the temperature in the cooling units with a thermometer. If the appliance thermometer reads 40°F or below, the food is safe.

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.

CERTIFIED FOOD PROTECTION MANAGER REQUIREMENTS

At least one person in charge of a food establishment shall demonstrate knowledge and training of the Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER), by being a certified food protection manager (CFPM). The CFPM must obtain his/her credentials through an accredited training program approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services. In addition, the City of Grand Prairie Code of Ordinances requires that all CFPM obtain a City of Grand Prairie Food Protection Manager Certificate within 30 days of employment. Additionally, the CFPM must be able to respond correctly to the health inspector's questions as they relate to the specific food operation. For additional information, please contact the Environmental Quality Division at 972-237-8055.

2019 Food Handler Schedule

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

*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.



How To Handle Eggs Safely

The USDA recommends storing eggs in a refrigerator at about 40°F to reduce the chances that any bacteria on the shell will multiply and cause a risk of illness. Store them in the refrigerator as soon as they are delivered. Proper refrigeration, cooking, and handling should prevent most egg-safety problems. People can enjoy eggs if these safe handling guidelines are followed:



Casseroles and other dishes containing eggs should be cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F.



Serve cooked eggs and dishes containing eggs immediately after cooking, or place in shallow containers for quick cooling and refrigerate at once for later use. Use within 3 to 4 days.



Wash utensils, equipment, and work areas with hot, soapy water before and after contact with eggs.



Raw eggs and other ingredients, combined according to recipe directions, should be cooked immediately or refrigerated and cooked within 24 hours.



Don't keep eggs out of the refrigerator more than 2 hours.



Always cook eggs until both the white and yolk are firm.

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Environmental Quality Division
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Handling Fruits and Vegetables

Are you concerned about the potential for E. coli, salmonella, or other bacteria poisoning only when it comes to meats, fish, and poultry? Did you know the same risks are present in fruits and vegetables? It can be argued that fruits and vegetables are even more dangerous due to the extensive handling they encounter.

To protect yourself and others examine, separate, and clean.

Examine: Be sure to thoroughly examine every piece of produce before purchasing. Purchase fresh-looking produce. Don't buy any that are bruised, shriveled, moldy, or slimy. Even if you do trim off the decayed area, rapid deterioration likely will spread to the salvaged area. Dispose of any produce in your possession that has any sign of spoilage.

Separate: Fruits and vegetables should be stored and prepared separate from animal products. This will reduce any chance of cross contamination. Equipment and utensils, used to store and prepare produce, must be cleaned and sanitized before use to ensure no cross contamination occurs.

CLEAN: Besides ensuring equipment and utensils are clean, the produce itself should be cleaned before preparation. Washing fruits and vegetables requires nothing more than scrubbing under running, cold, drinkable water (use a produce brush - when a brush is appropriate). For additional information visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/food-safety>



This Newsletter is a publication of:
Environmental Services Department
Environmental Quality Division

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Chemical Foodborne Illness

This type of foodborne illness is caused by contamination of food by chemicals such as pesticides (used in insect and rodent control), certain cleaning compounds, and sometimes by use of improper containers (pots) for cooking or storing food. Drugs and pesticides are used in agriculture chemicals to control infestation of fruit and vegetables. Some pesticides include insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, and some germicides.



These chemicals when ingested in large amounts can cause serious foodborne illness. All poisonous chemicals and cleaning compounds should be carefully labeled and stored in an area separate from foods. Galvanized containers should never be used for storage of acid foods such as lemonade and tomatoes. To prevent the possibility of chemical foodborne illness from pesticides, all fresh fruits and vegetables should be washed thoroughly. Even chemicals, which are quite harmless when present in small amounts, have caused severe illness or death when eaten in large quantities. Pay attention while preparing food to prevent accidental contaminants. WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!!!!