

Hygienic food preparation and handling in food businesses

Information for food premises

Don't let your food turn nasty!

Food poisoning is a serious health problem. It can cause severe illness and even death.

Food poisoning can seriously damage the reputation of a business, damage the reputation of the food industry, and damage the jobs of many workers.

As a person who handles food – whether you are a kitchen hand, a food process worker, a shop assistant or a waiter – you have an important responsibility to handle food safely. So:

- protect other people from getting sick
- protect your reputation in the food industry
- protect your business, and
- protect your job.

Victorian and Australian food safety laws are designed to ensure that food that is sold is safe to eat and free of any contamination.

All Victorian businesses and organisations that make, display, transport or prepare food for sale must comply with the national Food Standards Code and Victorian food laws. This includes following the requirements that apply to certain classes of food premises, that is:

Class 1 and 2

- Follow the business food safety program
- Follow the advice given by the food safety supervisor, unless your premises is exempt.

Class 3

- Complete the required basic records about your food handling practices and keep them onsite.

Your council will advise you about the class of your food premises.

Everyone working in a food premises is encouraged to be trained in safe food handling. **Dofoodsafely**, a free online learning program, is a good place to start – go to <http://dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au>

Prevent food poisoning by practicing hygienic food preparation and handling

- ☑ Keep raw foods and ready-to-eat foods separate to avoid cross-contamination.
- ☑ If possible, use separate, clean utensils and cutting boards for raw foods and ready-to-eat foods, or wash and sanitise utensils and cutting boards between uses.
- ☑ Thoroughly clean, sanitise and dry cutting boards, knives, pans, plates, containers and other utensils after using them.
- ☑ Thoroughly rinse all fruit and vegetables in clean water to remove soil, bacteria, insects and chemicals.
- ☑ Make sure food is thoroughly cooked and the centre of the cooked food has reached 75°C.
- ☑ Avoid keeping **high-risk** foods in the Temperature Danger Zone. Keep chilled foods cold at 5°C or colder, and hot foods hot at 60°C or hotter.
- ☑ Avoid leaving just cooked food out to cool for more than one hour. As soon as food has cooled, place it in the refrigerator.
- ☑ Keep frozen food out of the Temperature Danger Zone while thawing by keeping it on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator.
- ☑ Take extra care when preparing foods in which the eggs remain uncooked - such as egg nog and homemade mayonnaise - as bacteria on the egg shells can contaminate the food.
- ☑ Be trained in safe food handling and preparation.

Cross-contamination

It is very important to keep raw food separate from cooked and ready-to-eat food.

Raw food can contain bacteria, which causes food poisoning.

Cooked or ready-to-eat food in contact with raw food can be contaminated by bacteria from the raw food. This is called cross-contamination.

Don't use the same knives, chopping boards, or other equipment for raw food and cooked or ready-to-eat food.

Thoroughly wash and sanitise equipment after each use.

Handling food

Everyone has bacteria on their bodies. Even healthy people can spread bacteria onto food by touching it with their hands.

Thoroughly wash and dry hands before handling food and between handling raw food and cooked or ready-to-eat food.

Use clean, sanitised utensils (tongs, spoons, spatulas) to handle cooked or ready-to-eat food.

Gloves

Disposable gloves can be used.

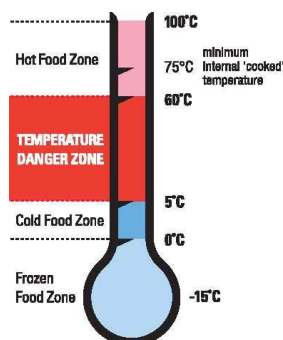
The same precautions should be taken when handling raw food and cooked or ready-to-eat foods. Wash and dry hands thoroughly before putting on gloves, and always use fresh gloves.

Change gloves:

- at least once every hour
- if they become contaminated
- if they tear
- when switching between handling raw and ready-to-eat foods
- when changing tasks
- after taking rubbish out, and
- after sweeping, mopping and cleaning.

Cooking and heating food

Bacteria grow quickly in **high-risk** foods when they are kept at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C. This is called the Temperature Danger Zone.



It is very important not to keep high-risk foods in the Temperature Danger Zone longer than is absolutely necessary.

Cooking food to over 75°C kills most of the bacteria. Make sure food is thoroughly cooked, and has reached 75°C at the centre.

Cooling food

Just cooked foods should not be left out to cool for more than one hour. As soon as food has cooled, place it in the refrigerator or freezer.

Large portions of food cool faster if divided into smaller quantities.

Keep frozen food frozen solid during storage.

Thawing frozen food

Thaw food thoroughly before cooking. Bacteria can grow in frozen food while it is thawing, so keep frozen food out of the Temperature Danger Zone.

Thaw frozen food on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, and keep it in the fridge until it is ready to be cooked.

If using a microwave oven to thaw food, cook it immediately after defrosting.

If you have to cook food that is still frozen, make sure that the food is cooked right through, and that its core temperature reaches 75°C.

Avoid re-freezing thawed food. Bacteria do not die when food is refrozen and are still there when the food is thawed again.

Packing and serving prepared food

Store food in clean, non-toxic, food storage containers which are strong enough for the job.

Wash and sanitise containers before using them.

Do not re-use containers that are only meant to be used once.

When serving food, make sure that all cutlery and crockery is clean and undamaged.

More information

A range of resources on safe food handling is available on the Department of Health Food Safety website. Go to www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety or telephone 1300 364 352.

Local councils can also provide advice about safe food handling.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand has resources on food handling standards on its website – go to www.foodstandards.gov.au.

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 364 352.

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