

Food Handling & Preparation

These notes have been prepared with information from the National Food Safety Standards. Whilst much of the content is common sense, the issue relating to temperature management is important when preparing food for others.

Safe Temperatures

- Less than 5 degrees Celsius or higher than 60 degrees Celsius are safe temperatures.
- Food needs to be kept at these temperatures to prevent bacteria multiplying.
- The fastest growth of bacteria occurs at 37 degrees Celsius, the temperature of the human body.

Hazardous Foods

- Certain food types are more prone to harmful bacteria
- Raw meat, cooked meats, and any food containing meat (casseroles, curries, lasagna, meat pies)
- Dairy products – milk, cream, custard, and dairy desserts
- Seafood
- Processed fruit and vegetables – prepared salads and fruit packs
- Cooked rice and pasta
- Any processed foods containing egg, beans and nuts

Cooking Thoroughly

- Ensuring that food is thoroughly cooked will help to prevent the growth of bacteria.

Cooling Food

- Potentially hazardous foods need to be cooled as quickly as possible to prevent the growth of bacteria.
- The temperature needs to fall from 60 to 21 degrees Celsius in less than 2 hours and further reduced to 5 degrees Celsius or colder within the next 4 hours – the '2 hour/ 4 hour' Rule
- Shallow containers should be used to facilitate rapid cooling.
- A large container of food may take as long as 24 hours to cool to 5 degrees Celsius in refrigerator , the centre remains warm and bacteria grows.
- Ensure your refrigerator is not overstocked to ensure it is working at its best.

Reheating Food

- Pre-cooked food should be reheated to a temperature of at least 70 degrees Celsius, and held at this temperature for at least two minutes before serving.

General Hygiene

- Ensure that your hands are washed and dried thoroughly when preparing food.
- Wash with warm water and soap, and rinse thoroughly.
- Use tongs and other utensils where possible to handle food.
- Never use the same utensils for raw foods and cooked foods.
- Always clean and sanitise utensils.
- Take precautions to prevent contamination by hair, saliva, mucus, sweat, blood, fingernails, clothes, jewelry, and bandages.
- Do not handle food if you have vomiting, diarrhea, fever or sore throat with fever

Transporting Food

- Ensure the food is kept cold through the use of an esky or ice bricks
- If the weather is warm, transport the food in the car with the air-conditioning running rather than in the hot boot.