

Food Hygiene guidelines for the Huntly Hairst World's Best Stovies Competition

Good food hygiene is essential. It will help to protect consumers – including our judge - and the reputation of this event. Following some simple rules can help us to prevent food poisoning.

The 4 'C's

The four things to remember for good food hygiene are:

1. **Cleanliness**
2. **Cooking**
3. **Chilling**
4. **Cross contamination**

1. Cleanliness

Hands can easily spread bacteria around the kitchen and onto food. This is why it's important to always wash your hands. Unfortunately, food poisoning statistics suggest that washing hands may be overlooked or not carried out thoroughly, resulting in areas of the hands frequently being missed.

The method recommended by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) is as follows:

- Use warm running water – ideally 45 - 50°C
- Wet hands before applying un-perfumed bactericidal soap
- Rub hands vigorously for about 15 -20 seconds ensuring both hands are washed and particular attention is paid to washing thumbs, between the fingers, fingertips and under the nails
- Rinse hands under running water
- Dry hands thoroughly using a clean dry paper towel
- In the kitchen it's better to have separate chopping boards for raw meat and for ready-to-eat food.
- Dirty, damp cloths are the perfect place for bacteria to breed. So it's very important to wash kitchen cloths and sponges regularly and leave them to dry before using them again. If you want to choose the safest option, you could use disposable kitchen towels to wipe worktops and chopping boards. This is because you throw the kitchen towel away after using it once, so it is less likely to spread bacteria than cloths you use again.
- Tea towels can also spread bacteria. Remember, if you wipe your hands on a tea towel after you have touched raw meat, this will spread bacteria to the towel. Then, if you use the tea towel to dry a plate, the bacteria will spread to the plate.
- Separate raw meat and ready-to-eat food
- Raw meat contains harmful bacteria that can spread very easily to anything it touches, including other foods, worktops, chopping boards and knives.
- It's especially important to keep raw meat away from ready-to-eat foods, such as salad, fruit and bread. This is because these foods will not be cooked before you eat them, so any bacteria that get onto the foods will not be killed.

2. Cooking

Cooking food properly will help make sure that any harmful bacteria are killed. Eating food that isn't properly cooked could make you ill.

Making sure food is hot:

- Bacteria multiply at temperatures between 5°C and 63°C, the range known as the danger zone. The ideal temperature for bacterial multiplication is 37°C.
- Bacteria multiply more slowly at temperatures below 5°C and at temperatures above 63°C most food poisoning bacteria die.

At home to test if food has been properly cooked, check that it is 'piping hot' all the way through. Cut open food with a small knife so that you can check that it is piping hot in the middle.

Hot food should be served immediately and not kept warm for long periods which is ideal conditions for bacteria to multiply.

Using leftover food

- If you have cooked food that is not going to be eaten straight away, cool it quickly by dividing into smaller portions, remove it from hot cooking dishes and put into shallow containers. When cool, store in the fridge. Do not keep leftovers for longer than two days.

Reheating

- When you reheat food, make sure that it's piping hot all the way through. If the food is only warm it might not be safe to eat. Do not reheat rice. Do not reheat food more than once.

3. Chilling

It is very important to keep food at the right temperature to prevent bacterial growth. Check the label on the packaging and if it says that the food needs to be chilled or frozen put it straight into the refrigerator or freezer when you return from the shops. It is advisable that a cool bag is used to transport chilled and frozen in hot weather and if you live more than 30 mins away from the shop. Always follow the storage instructions on products.

4. Cross contamination

Cross contamination is the transfer of bacteria from foods (usually raw) to other food. Bacteria can also be transferred to foods via hands, work surfaces and equipment such as knives. Cross contamination is a major cause of food poisoning.

To prevent cross contamination:

- Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after you have touched raw chicken or meat.
- Always wash chopping boards, knives and utensils in hot soapy water after they have been used with raw chicken or meat and before you use them with other foods.
- Don't put raw chicken or meat next to cooked food on the grill or barbecue.
- Don't add sauce or marinade to cooked food if it has been used with raw chicken or meat.
- Store raw chicken and meat in a dish, on the bottom shelf of the fridge where it does not touch or drip onto other foods.
- Use separate tongs and utensils for raw chicken/meat and cooked chicken/meat.
- Some people think they should wash raw chicken and meat, but there is no need to do this because any germs will be killed if you cook it thoroughly. If you do wash raw chicken or meat, take care because you could splash germs onto the sink, worktop, dishes, food, or anything else nearby.

More information is available on: <http://www.studentsafety.org.uk/cateringfromhomesafely.pdf>