

KITCHEN USE AND SANITATION GUIDELINES
Based on the Virginia Department of Health Guidelines
(Chapter 421 Food Regulations, 1/1/2010)

1. Washing hands

Keep hands and exposed portions of arms clean while engaged in food preparation. Clean hands and exposed portions of arms with a cleaning compound in the washing sink by vigorously rubbing together the surfaces of lathered hands for at least 20 seconds and thoroughly rinsing with clean water. Pay particular attention to the areas underneath fingernails and between fingers. **It is important to wash hands at the following times:**

- a. After touching bare human body parts other than clean hands and cleaned exposed portions of arms
- b. Before the start of food preparation
- c. Between handling different food items, such as raw meat, poultry, fish, vegetables and ready to eat foods. (Don't forget to wipe off the faucet!)
- d. After using the bathroom or changing a diaper.
- e. After touching a pet or animal.
- f. After tending to a sick person, blowing your nose, sneezing, or coughing.
- g. After handling garbage or soiled equipment or utensils.
- h. During food preparation, as often as necessary to remove soil and contamination and to prevent cross contamination when changing tasks.
- i. After touching your face or hair or after other activities that contaminate the hands.

2. Use of gloves

- a. If used, single-use gloves shall be used for only one task such as working with ready-to-eat food or with raw animal food, used for no other purpose, and discarded when damaged or soiled, or when interruptions occur in the operation.
- b. Slash-resistant gloves may be used with ready-to-eat food that will not be subsequently cooked if the slash-resistant gloves have a smooth, durable, and nonabsorbent outer surface; or if the slash-resistant gloves are covered with a smooth, durable, nonabsorbent glove, or a single-use glove.
- c. Cloth gloves shall not be used in direct contact with food unless the food is subsequently cooked (as required under Virginia Department of Health's Food Regulations Chapter 421 12 VAC 5-421-700 through 12 VAC 5-421-760) such as frozen food or a primal cut of meat.

2. Preventing cross-contamination

Bacteria from raw meats that are spread to other foods, utensils, or surfaces is called "cross-contamination". Mixing raw meats with ready to eat foods is the primary source of cross-contamination. This important and multi-faceted category includes the following components:

Raw meats, poultry, and fish

- a. Always separate raw meats away from produce and ready to eat foods.
- b. At the store, have the cashier bag raw meats separately.
- c. Always store raw meats on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, so meat juices won't drip on other foods.

Kitchen counters

- a. Wash well with hot soapy water and then use a sanitizing solution (mix 1/2 tablespoon of standard strength non-scented bleach for every gallon of water).
- b. Do not let pets walk on work surfaces and don't sit on work surfaces.
- c. Whenever you have finished working with one food, clean the counters well before introducing a new food.

Cutting boards

- a. It is a good idea to have separate cutting boards, one for meat, fish, poultry, and one for foods that will be served raw.
- b. Plastic and wood cutting boards should be washed with soapy water, rinsed and then sanitized with a bleach solution or by washing in the dishwasher. To make a bleach solution, mix 1/2 tablespoon of bleach with one gallon of cool water. Make solution as needed.
- c. Cutting boards, especially wooden ones, should be regularly inspected to ensure that food is not getting imbedded in cracks or crevices. Once cracked or badly scored, cutting boards should be replaced.
- d. Throw out cutting boards when they get excessively worn or hard-to-clean cracks appear.

Kitchen dishcloths, sponges and aprons

- a. Repeatedly using the same cloth to wipe counters spreads germs. Remember to wash towels in the washing machine daily and put sponges in the dishwasher.
- b. Avoid wiping your hands on your apron, as you will pick up bacteria from the last time you wiped your hands.
- c. When hand washing dishes, allow them to air-dry. Don't use towels to dry them, as this will spread germs.

Utensils and serving pieces for cooked and raw food

- a. If you take raw meat, poultry, or fish to the outdoor grill, also bring a new container to put food in after it is cooked.
- b. Wash or replace cutlery and utensils that were used while product was raw.

If your meat, poultry or seafood was in a marinade, bring marinade to a boil for at least 3 minutes before using as a sauce. However, it's usually better to discard marinade altogether.

Uncooked foods

- c. Wash lettuce well, even pre-washed produce, by soaking in a bowl of cool, fresh, drinkable water.

- d. Clean berries and other fruits with running water; the friction of the water will brush off bacteria.
- e. Wash melons and other large fruits and vegetables that are not going to be cooked. Remember they came from a farm, grew in soil, and have been handled by numerous people. If you cut an unwashed melon, bacteria from the surface will be pushed inside by the knife.
- f. To prevent cross-contamination, always wash foods in a bowl, not in a water-filled sink.
- g. If you wash raw chicken, meat, or fish, be sure to wash out the sink well to prevent cross-contamination.
- h. When using a food thermometer, always wash it between probes.
- i. Frequent hand washing is crucial in preventing cross contamination

5. Temperature

Bacteria grow rapidly between the temperatures of 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit. This temperature range is known as the "Danger Zone". To properly store, hold, and cook foods, it is imperative to minimize the amount of time foods are at these temperatures. Pathogenic bacteria thrive in the Danger Zone; certain strains can double in number every 20 minutes. These are the bacteria that cause food borne illnesses, but do not affect taste, smell, or appearance of the food.

- a. Any foods that have been in this temperature range for two hours or more should be discarded; they might taste all right, but can make you very sick.
- b. Don't marinate food at room temperature for longer than 1 hour.

6. Refrigeration

- a. The refrigerator is one of the most important items for keeping foods safe. Always refrigerate perishable items immediately to minimize reproduction of pathogenic bacteria. Refrigeration will not, however, completely protect foods from spoilage bacteria. This family of bacteria can multiply at low temperatures, and diminish the quality of foods, contributing to off-flavors and aromas.
- b. It is important to maintain the temperature of the food in your refrigerator below 40 degrees F. Ideal refrigerator temperature is between 36 and 38 degrees F.
- c. Frequently check the temperature with an appliance thermometer. If your refrigerator exceeds 40 degrees F for over two hours, dispose of all perishable foods.
- d. When refrigerating cooked foods, divide food into smaller portions so they will chill faster.
- e. It is also important not to overfill your refrigerator, as cold air circulation is necessary to keep foods chilled.
- f. The door areas of the refrigerator have frequent temperature fluctuations from opening and closing, so don't store perishable foods on the door. Keep eggs in the carton inside the refrigerator instead of the egg rack, and don't store milk in the door racks. If food spills in your refrigerator, wipe up the spill immediately and sanitize if necessary.
- g. Do weekly checks to assure that food is not spoiling, and occasionally wash all surfaces with warm, soapy water. To keep odors from forming, leave opened box of baking soda on a shelf and change every few months.

7. Thawing frozen foods

There are three safe ways to thaw frozen food: in the refrigerator, in cold water, and in the microwave. Leaving food on a counter or thawing in hot water will cause food to be in the Danger Zone.

- a. Refrigerator thawing can take a long time, but it is the safest method. Plan ahead, as large food items, such as a turkey, may take 24 hours for every 5 pounds. For smaller items, such as chicken breasts, put in the refrigerator in the morning for dinner that evening. Foods that are thawed in the refrigerator can be refrozen safely, with some loss in aesthetic quality.
- b. Cold-water thawing is faster, but can be more complicated. Meat should be wrapped in a leak-proof bag or else it will absorb the water. Keep water cold by changing it every 30 minutes. A bag of chicken breasts that weighs under a pound will defrost in less than an hour, and a large turkey takes 2 to 3 hours for every 5 pounds. Foods thawed in cold water must be cooked before refreezing.
- c. If food is thawed with a microwave, it must be cooked immediately following the thawing. During this process, some of the surface areas might start cooking and are in the danger zone. For this reason, we don't recommend microwave defrosting. Foods thawed in the microwave must be cooked before refreezing.

8. Dish Washing Procedures

- a. When hand washing dishes always use the hottest water that you can comfortably work in without scalding yourself and use an appropriate amount of antibacterial dish soap.
- b. Rinse with hot water and air dry (DO NOT TOWEL DRY since this can spread germs).
- c. Always use clean sponges or dishcloths and rinse and sanitize them often.
- d. When using a mechanical dishwasher the wash water should be a minimum of 160 degrees combined with an appropriate detergent and rinse with water that is a minimum of 180 degrees combined with an appropriate rinsing agent.
- e. Do not use the dish washing and food preparation sinks for any other use, such as washing mops, rags, paint brushes, or other non kitchen use.

9. Food Safety Temperatures (degrees Fahrenheit)

- a. Ground Meat & Meat Mixtures
 - Turkey, chicken 170° F
 - Veal, beef, lamb, pork 160° F (**Note:** 150° F is good for whole cuts)
- b. Fresh Beef
 - Medium Rare 145° F
 - Medium 160° F
 - Well Done 170° F
- c. Fresh Pork
 - Well Done 170° F
- d. Poultry
 - Chicken, Whole 180° F

Turkey, Whole 180° F
Poultry Breasts, Roasted 170° F
Poultry Thighs, Wings 180° F

e. Seafood

Fin fish cook until opaque and flakes easily with a fork

Shrimp, lobster, crab shell should turn red and flesh should become pearly opaque

Scallops flesh should turn milky white or opaque and be firm to touch

Clams, mussels, oysters cook until shells open; discard any unopened clams, mussels or oysters.

10. Ice Machine.

- a. Clean and use the scoops provided when getting ice from the ice machine.
- b. Do not use hands, pitchers, cups, or glasses to fill.
- c. Clean the ice machine periodically.