Food for Thought

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Volume 1 Issue 1
July 2009

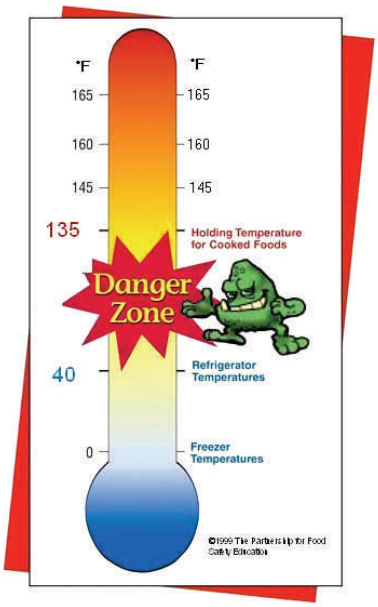
Food Safety Fred Says:

- **Wash Hands Often!**
- **Know your food source.**
- **Keep hot foods hot!**
- **Keep cold foods cold!**
- **Cook to the correct temperature.**
- **Use a food thermometer.**
- **Wash! Rinse! Sanitize!**
- **Wash Hands Often!**

What is a Risk Factor?

When one talks about food safety, the real subject is the prevention of foodborne illness. Job #1 in any restaurant is to prevent foodborne illness. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has determined that there are five ***risk factors*** that lead to foodborne illness in a restaurant. This conclusion was reached by analyzing the causes of foodborne illness outbreaks over a period of years. To reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness, food safety training must include a discussion of risk factors and how to reduce them.

The first risk factor is having a ***safe food source***. All foods that are prepared for sale to the public must be bought from a safe, regulated source – local grocery store or permitted distributors are examples. Foods *may not* be prepared at home. If you have a question about the source of the food, don't buy it! Once the food has been purchased, the handling of the food becomes a factor in preventing foodborne illness. When food is not kept at the right temperature, either hot or cold, this is referred to as ***time and temperature abuse***. This is another of the risk factors. Hot holding, cold holding, cooling, thawing and reheating can all lead to time and temperature abuse if done incorrectly. It is important to train employees about the Danger Zone - (temperatures between 41°F and 135°F). The longer that food is in the Danger Zone, the more chance that foodborne illness can result.



An ***inadequate cook temperature*** can also lead to foodborne illness. Cook to the proper temperatures (see chart at left) to kill the bacteria in (Next page)

When Is It Done?

- **Chicken - 165°F**
- **Ground beef - 155°F**
- **Pork - 145°F**
- **Fish - 145°F**
- **Leftovers (reheat) - 165°F**
- **Hot hold (after cooking) - 135°F**

Welcome to *Food for Thought!*

This is the first issue of a quarterly newsletter provided to you by the Food Safety Program of the Fairfax County Health Department. This newsletter will focus on food safety and what you can do to promote food safety in your establishment. You are encouraged to use *Food for Thought* as a training tool for new and old employees alike. Finally, if you have questions about an article or have a particular subject you would like to see discussed, please contact the Health Department at 703-246-2444.

raw foods. Use a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of cooked foods. Do not judge doneness by how the food looks! ***Contaminated equipment*** is another risk factor. Keeping equipment clean and safe from cross-contamination is a never-ending challenge in food establishments. Do not use the same cutting board for raw chicken and vegetables. Do wash, rinse and sanitize all prep equipment between uses. Change gloves when going from one prep table to another.

The final risk factor, is ***poor personal hygiene***. Good personal hygiene includes wearing clean clothes/aprons, keeping fingernails trimmed, wearing hats or hair nets to cover hair and washing hands often! Hands can be a major source of cross-contamination leading to foodborne illness.

Handling ready-to-eat foods with bare hands is a sure way to pass on a foodborne illness if an employee is ill. Handwashing is *the* most important thing to do to prevent the spread of germs which can lead to foodborne illness.

By taking steps to reduce the occurrence of risk factors, a restaurant can reduce the likelihood of a foodborne illness outbreak and keep the customer truly satisfied at the same time! For more information on food safety in restaurants, visit our webpage at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/food.

Kitchen Corner Quiz

1. The CDC has identified five risk factors of foodborne illness.
   - A. True
   - B. False
2. Food served in a restaurant may be prepared at home.
   - A. True
   - B. False
3. The Danger Zone is the temperature range
   - A. Between 41°F and 70°F
   - B. Above 32°F and below 165°F
   - C. Below 41°F and above 135°F
   - D. Between 41°F and 135°F
4. How can you tell when chicken is cooked properly?
   - A. When it is not pink on the inside.
   - B. When the juices run clear.
   - C. When the food thermometer registers 165°F or more.
5. Cleaning and sanitizing equipment, utensils and prep surfaces
   - A. prevents cross contamination.
   - B. means someone else doesn't have to do it.
   - C. only needs to be done once a day.
6. Good personal hygiene includes:
   - A. Clean clothes.
   - B. Wearing hair coverings such as a hat or hair net.
   - C. Washing hands often.
   - D. All of the above.

Answers: 1.A, 2.B, 3. D, 4. C, 5. A, 6. D

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