



# FOOD DRAP

Winter 2017

## Food safety tips for hospitality venues and large events

It is the season for large celebrations and gatherings as the end of the year approaches. Buffet style meals are popular ways to enjoy a feast with your loved ones. Share the gift of food safety this holiday with the following food safety tips!

**Cook foods thoroughly.** Always cook food to the proper internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Use a probe thermometer to measure the thickest part of the food; this is the **ONLY** way to determine if hazardous foods are cooked to a safe temperature. Use the following chart to determine the required cooking temperatures:

Hazardous foods	Internal cooking temperatures
Whole poultry (e.g. chicken, turkey, duck)	82°C / 180°F
Ground/cut poultry	74°C / 165°F
Food mixtures (e.g. soups, casseroles)	74°C / 165°F
Pork and pork products	71°C / 160°F
Ground meat (other than poultry)	71°C / 160°F
Fish	70°C / 158°F

**Keep hot foods hot; keep cold foods cold.** Hot foods should be held at 60°C / 140°F or hotter. Keep foods hot with chafing dishes and warming trays. Cold foods should be held at 4°C / 40°F or colder. Keep foods cold by placing it on ice. Bacteria will grow quickly when left in the "temperature danger zone" of 4°C-60°C / 40°F-140°F. Catered venues?

Ensure all foods are being cooked to the required internal temperature. Transport hot foods in insulated containers and cold foods in coolers with ice.

**Provide plenty of utensils and plates.** Provide serving tongs and spoons for each food item (including finger foods) to prevent contamination between guests. Remove used plates from the table to ensure guests are not using soiled plates when they re-enter the buffet line for refills.

**Cover food.** Keep foods covered with lids where possible or use sneeze guards to prevent sneezes and coughs from contaminating the food.

**Serve foods in small portions.** Serve food in small quantities to ensure it stays hot or cold. Replenish foods frequently. Never mix freshly prepared foods with existing foods. Always replace empty platters with a new batch of food.

**Always wash your hands.** Ensure food handlers wash their hands prior to handling or serving food and when their hands are contaminated.

**Handling leftovers.** Refrigerate all leftovers immediately in shallow containers so they cool quickly. Foods stored in room temperature for more than 2 hours should be discarded. Remember to re-heat leftovers to its original internal cooking temperature.

**Always remember: When in doubt, throw it out!**

# Recalls

Has your favourite item at the grocery store just been recalled? Do not be alarmed because this means our food safety management systems are working! A recall is when a product is being removed from sale because of a potential health risk that can cause illness to members of the public. There are three (3) classes of recall based on the likeliness that it will cause illness.

**Class 1:** Considered to be most severe and can cause serious adverse health consequences.

**Class 2:** A product that may cause temporary however not serious adverse health consequences

**Class 3:** A product not likely to cause adverse health consequences

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will initiate a recall when it is determined that a product is contaminated or the production or processing has not met the regulated standard. It is the responsibility of the company to remove the recalled product from sale and distribution. But how can we ensure that our friends and family safe? Some recalls may require media releases determined by the severity and the scale of the recall. You can also subscribe to or visit the CFIA website for weekly recall reports.

It may take some time before a recall is determined and as a result, you already have the product in your home or you already consumed it. If you have not eaten the product, return it to the place of purchase for a full refund. If you have eaten the product and you're feeling sick, seek medical attention immediately. Be sure to separate and return any leftover recalled product.



Remember, your local Health Department is always available for any questions or concerns with regards to food safety and food recalls. If you're ever in doubt about a recalled product, call the Health Department for direction – keep yourself, your family, and friends safe.

# Garbage and waste disposal

As winter approaches and temperatures drop, many will avoid the outdoors by any means necessary. For some unscrupulous heat-seekers, this includes avoiding the cold trek to the garbage bins and allowing their garbage to accumulate indoors.

One person's trash is another pest's treasure; garbage provides a fantastic food source for rodents and insects. Ensure that organic waste is separated from regular garbage and is placed into the compost bin. Food containers (e.g. pizza boxes, takeout containers, foil liners, etc.) should be scraped of leftover food before they are discarded into your recycling bin or vermin proof garbage can. The Durham Region Works Department recommends storing your garbage can and green bin inside the garage or shed.

For apartments, condos, and units that have a communal garbage disposal area, ensure entrances to these areas are tightly sealed after your enter and exit. Notify the landlord or building manager immediately if you notice pest issues or overflowing waste.

Do not let garbage and unwanted items accumulate inside your home or yard. Clutter provides convenient hiding spots for pests and makes it difficult to monitor for pest activity. If you have large unwanted items (furniture, sports equipment, etc.), consider selling, recycling, or having them taken during your regular bi-weekly collection.

Although proper waste disposal seems like a chore, it's a much easier task than removing a pest infestation. It not only benefits your own home, but also helps to keep pests away from your neighboring properties. So put on your slippers, take the trash out, and don't forget to wash your hands after you're done!



# Festive Food Safety

This holiday season, spread cheer – not foodborne illnesses! Forgetting about food safety can turn merry into misery. Whether preparing food for customers or hosting a get-together with friends and family, follow the four simple steps below to ensure the food you serve is safe.

1. **Clean.** Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds before and after handling food. Do not wash raw chicken – the water can splash and spread bacteria everywhere. Rinse vegetables and produce under cold running water. Wash and sanitize utensils, countertops and cutting boards before and after each use.  
**Tip:** How to prepare a sanitizer - In a sink, use a mixture of ½ tsp bleach to 4 cups of water and soak items in solution for at least 45 seconds. In a spray bottle, use 1 tsp bleach to 4 cups of water, spray surfaces and keep them wet for at least 1 minute to kill germs.
2. **Separate.** Bacteria can transfer from one food or surface to another (cross-contamination). To prevent this, use separate cutting boards for raw foods (meat, poultry and seafood) and for cooked or ready-to-eat foods that do not require cooking (fruits and vegetables). Store raw foods below and separate from cooked and ready-to-eat foods.  
**Tip:** Use different or colour-coded cutting boards for raw versus cooked foods.
3. **Cook.** When thawing frozen food, thaw overnight in the refrigerator or under cold running water. Cook hazardous food items to a safe internal temperature and

use a probe thermometer by inserting the sanitized probe into the thickest part of the meat and away from bones.

**Tip:** Purchase apple cider that is labelled as pasteurized and use pasteurized liquid eggs in recipes where the eggs won't be cooked (like eggnog). Pasteurization destroys harmful bacteria such as Salmonella and E. coli.

4. **Chill.** Improper cooling is the leading cause of food-borne illness. Food left in the Temperature Danger Zone ranging between 4°C to 60°C can lead to the growth and multiplication of bacteria (doubling every 20 minutes!). Leftovers should be refrigerated within 2 hours and consumed within 3 days. Reheat only once (and to the original cooking temperatures). Remember, food contaminated with bacteria may not look, smell or taste bad.  
**When in doubt, throw it out!**  
**Tip:** Rapidly cool foods by transferring into shallow pans, using ice baths and stirring frequently.

Foodborne illnesses can affect anyone, but vulnerable people (young children, older adults, pregnant women, and those with weakened immune systems) are at an increased risk. Remember, don't handle food if you are ill and always perform proper handwashing techniques.

**Put food safety on your plate this holiday season and all year round!**

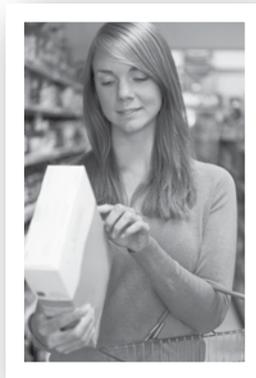
# Food Allergies

An allergic reaction occurs when a person's immune system identifies a substance (aka. 'allergen') as an invader to the body. A small amount of the substance can trigger a reaction, and the body sends out signals to fight the invader. When the body reacts to the allergen, the results can be life threatening.

Health Canada has identified the following as Priority Allergens: eggs, milk, mustard, peanuts, soy, seafood, sesame, sulphites, tree nuts, and wheat. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is responsible for enforcing specific labelling requirements for consumer products that have any one of these priority allergens as an ingredient, so they are easier to identify in foods.

There is no cure for food allergies; the only way to prevent allergic reactions is avoidance of the allergen. Below is a list of key ways to prevent an allergic reaction:

- Triple check product labels: at the store, when you bring it home, and again before consuming
- Avoid products if you do not recognize an ingredient
- Teach children not to share food with others at school or when eating out



## Eating Out

- Always carry an epinephrine pen or auto-injector

- Tell your server or chef at a restaurant that you have an allergy before ordering, and ask specific questions about how the food is prepared
- Review the menu online, or call ahead to ask questions before visiting the restaurant
- Eat during less busy hours, so servers and chefs are not as rushed
- Order simple foods with less potential for cross-contamination with allergens
- Avoid buffets. Cross contamination can occur easily when serving utensils are moved
- Have an allergy card. Small cards or stickers outlining your allergy can be created on the computer and used as a tool to communicate to your server.
- If you are travelling, have the cards created in the native language to help communicate

## For Food Handlers

- Always wash, rinse, and sanitize equipment and utensils properly to rid them of all traces of allergens.
- Cook the allergy safe food first if making several dishes
- Always conduct proper hand washing. Hand sanitizers are not enough to remove allergens from the hands

Whether you, a loved one, a friend, a stranger, or a customer has a food allergy, everyone can play a role in protecting those with allergies by being **ALLERGY AWARE**.

# Importance of Hand Washing

Did you know that many diseases and illnesses are spread when individuals do not wash their hands thoroughly with warm potable water and soap? Illnesses such as the cold and flu can easily spread from one individual to another, either directly through contact with an ill individual or indirectly from contact with a contaminated surface.

So, who is at risk of getting ill? Individuals with weakened or undeveloped immune systems such as children under the age of 5 years old and adults over the age of 65 years old, individuals with chronic health issues, and pregnant women.

## How can we protect people in our homes, community and at work from getting sick?

Hand washing is an effective way for everyone to do their part to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses such as the cold and influenza (flu) within their homes, community and workplace. Here's how in a few easy steps:

1. Wet hands with warm running water.
2. Apply soap.
3. Rub hands together and scrub all surfaces of the hands for at least 15 seconds to loosen dirt and germs. Don't forget finger tips, between fingers, back of hands, and base of thumbs.
4. Rinse hands under water using a rubbing action to remove debris.

5. Dry hands with a clean towel, paper towel or an air dryer.

6. Taps should be turned off using the towel.

Viruses such as the flu can live on surfaces for up to 24 hours. We can pick up these viruses by touching contaminated surfaces with our hands. That is why it is so important to always wash our hands because they do not need to look contaminated to be infectious.

It is recommended that you get the flu shot every year. If you have taken the flu shot, continuing to wash your hands with soap and water can help prevent spreading the virus to other people and reduce the risk of acquiring the illness.

If you are ill or have symptoms of illness, you should stay home from work. Many workplaces have workplace policies that give staff sick days or ask/require staff to stay home to prevent the spread of illness throughout the workplace.

**Be an informed flu fighter, practice good hand hygiene and don't give it the chance to spread.**



# Why you should not store food in the washroom

In order to reduce and prevent the amount of food-borne illness cases, proper food storage is considered a major factor in mitigating this risk. The last thing a customer wants to find out was that the ingredients used to prepare their meal were being stored in the washroom. Washrooms should never be considered as a designated food storage area due to the possibility of contamination from direct and in-direct factors. Not only is the idea of storing food in the washrooms alarming, but the risk of someone contracting a food borne illness significantly increases. For instance, food being stored near a hand washing sink or toilet can become contaminated from exposure to soiled water. The most common food borne illnesses that can be contracted from feces include Norovirus, Campylobacter, E.coli, Salmonella and Shigella.

In order to prevent the spread of these harmful germs, Ontario Food Premises Regulation 562 requires the following to ensure safe food storage:

- Separate storage of raw foods and ready-to-eat foods,
- Food must be stored in food safe containers with proper fitting covers/lids,
- Chemical substances such as sanitizers/pesticides must be labelled and stored away from food products,
- Food must be stored on storage racks; at least 6 inches off the ground,
- Ensure proper sanitary maintenance and construction of floors, walls, ceilings, ventilation and housekeeping.

**Food Rap is published by the Environmental Health Division of the Durham Region Health Department and is distributed to food premises operators and employees in Durham Region. Please send comments or suggestions to:**

## **Food Rap**

Durham Region Health Department  
Environmental Health Division  
101 Consumers Drive, 2nd Floor, Whitby,  
Ontario L1N 1C4

Telephone: 905-723-3818  
1-888-777-9613

Fax: 905-666-1887

Website: [durham.ca](http://durham.ca)



## **Food Safety Program Contact:**

Senior Public Health Inspector, Food Safety

**Acknowledgments:** Greg Annis, Mike Vortisch, Jack Le, Julia Perry, Philip Barrocas, Gary Zhang, Fiona Lau, Maryam Azimi, Julia Wark, Ryan Soosee

**The articles in this publication may be reprinted without permission provided the Health Department is acknowledged.**

# Food Safety Training & Certification

It is important to ensure food handlers understand and practice basic food safety procedures to ensure the food being served and/or offered for sale is safe and of high quality. Food handler training can be one of the most effective ways of enhancing food safety.

The Durham Region Health Department (DRHD) strongly recommends that managers, supervisors and staff directly involved in food preparation complete an approved food handler training course and receive their Food Safety Training Certification.



The DRHD offers Food Safety Training and Certification courses each month. Register and learn how you can prevent food poisoning. The course fee is \$40 and includes the manual, full day of instruction and exam at the end of the day. Alternatively, the fee is \$20 if the manual is downloaded. You will also receive a certificate and wallet card when you have passed the exam. A self-study option is also available where you can review the course manual at home and then challenge the exam. The fee is \$25 and includes the manual and exam or \$10 if you download the study manual.

If you have previously taken the full course or have extensive food safety experience and knowledge and would like to only challenge the exam, the fee is \$10.

**The Food Training and Certification Program Course Manual is now available at [durham.ca](http://durham.ca).**

## Food Handler Training Course & Examination Schedule

Location: 605 Rossland Rd E, Whitby, Room 1G

Date	Time
January 10, 2018	8:30-4:30
January 24, 2018	8:30-4:30
February 14, 2018	8:30-4:30
February 28, 2018	8:30-4:30
March 7, 2018	8:30-4:30
March 28, 2018	8:30-4:30
April 11, 2018	8:30-4:30
May 9, 2018	8:30-4:30
June 13, 2018	8:30-4:30
July 11, 2018	8:30-4:30
August 8, 2018	8:30-4:30
September 12, 2018	8:30-4:30
September 26, 2018	8:30-4:30
October 10, 2018	8:30-4:30
October 24, 2018	8:30-4:30
November 14, 2018	8:30-4:30
November 28, 2018	8:30-4:30
December 12, 2018	8:30-4:30

## Food Handler Training Exam Challenge

Location: 605 Rossland Rd E, Whitby, Room 1B

Date	Time
January 8, 2018	12:30-4:30
February 5, 2018	12:30-4:30
March 5, 2018	12:30-4:30
April 9, 2018	12:30-4:30
May 7, 2018	12:30-4:30
June 4, 2018	12:30-4:30
July 9, 2018	12:30-4:30
August 13, 2018	12:30-4:30
September 10, 2018	12:30-4:30
October 1, 2018	12:30-4:30
November 5, 2018	12:30-4:30
December 3, 2018	12:30-4:30

**To participate in any of the above options, you must register and pay the applicable fee by contacting the Health Department at 905-723-3818. Hope to see you there!**