

# food MATTERS

No. 23

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Preparing Raw Produce Safely
- Foam Container Ban in New York City
- Cannabidiol (CBD) Prohibited in Food and Drink
- The Calibrated Thermometer: A Kitchen Essential

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE • SUMMER 2019

## Preparing Raw Produce Safely

Foodborne illness outbreaks associated with raw produce can be serious and even deadly. Newborns, adults who are older, and those who are pregnant or have weakened immune systems are most at risk for foodborne illness. Some of the most common causes of foodborne illness are *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) and *Salmonella*.

In November 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) traced *E. coli* to romaine lettuce from California. Romaine was removed from stores and restaurants, but not before 62 people became ill. In 2011, *Listeria monocytogenes* was



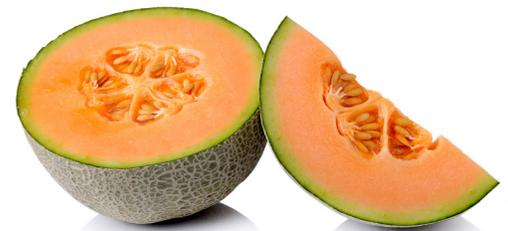
traced to whole cantaloupes from Colorado. The outbreak sickened 147 people and killed 33. CDC officials identified unsanitary packing conditions and dirty equipment as the likely cause.

Raw fruits and vegetables with the greatest contamination risk include:

- Melons (cantaloupe, watermelon, honeydew)
- Leafy greens, such as spinach, lettuce (all types), kale, cabbage, arugula and chard
- Tomatoes
- Raw seed sprouts (alfalfa, bean)

To protect customers from foodborne illness, employees must wash their hands thoroughly before preparing food, before putting on gloves to work with food, after using the restroom, and when switching between working with raw food and ready-to-eat food. Employees should also:

- Avoid bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat food by wearing clean gloves or using a barrier such as tongs or deli paper.



- Use the first in, first out (FIFO) inventory method by using the oldest items first.
- Wash produce thoroughly with potable running water before cutting, cooking or serving.
- Use separate cutting boards for produce, raw meat, poultry, seafood and ready-to-eat food.
- Store fruits and vegetables away from, and not next to or below, raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- Clean and sanitize cutting boards and utensils between uses.
- Keep all cut fruits and vegetables at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

## Foam Container Ban in New York City



As of January 1, 2019, New York City food service establishments and mobile food vending trucks, carts and commissaries can no longer offer, sell or possess single-use foam food containers, such as foam takeout clamshells, cups, plates, bowls, trays and coolers. Beginning on July 1, 2019, summonses will be issued, subject to fines, to establishments

that are not complying with this new requirement.

Many packaging alternatives to foam are available, including aluminum, rigid plastics, uncoated paper, glass and compostable items. Establishments and vendors can ask packaging distributors for alternatives to foam products.

For more information about alternatives, review the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board's (MSWAB) analysis and list of [Foam Alternative Product Suggestions](#).

For information about the foam container ban, visit [nyc.gov/foamban](http://nyc.gov/foamban) or call **311**.

## Cannabidiol Prohibited in Food and Drink

In December 2018, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) stated that it is unlawful to add cannabidiol (CBD) to food or drink. As a result, the Health Code also prohibits adding CBD to food or drink, including packaged food products containing CBD.

The Health Department is educating food service establishments and retailers that CBD cannot be added to food and drink, and to stop offering food, drink and

packaged food products that contain CBD. Beginning July 1, 2019, if operators do not comply, the Health Department will embargo food, drink and packaged food products that contain CBD — these products will have to be returned to the supplier or discarded. Starting October 1, 2019, the Health Department will begin issuing violations to food service establishments for offering food, drink and packaged food products containing CBD. Violations may be subject to fines and violation points



that count toward the establishment's letter grade.

For more information on CBD in food or drink, visit the [FDA website](#).

# The Calibrated Thermometer: A Kitchen Essential



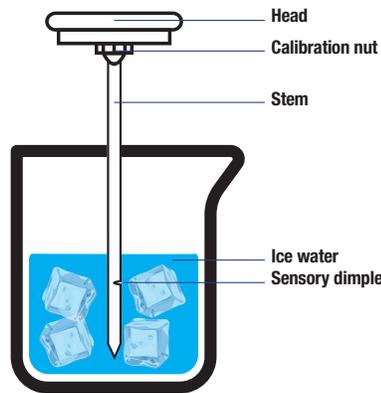
A working, accurate thermometer is essential in a food service kitchen — it's the only way to make sure food is at the required temperature. Thermometers must be calibrated daily to ensure accurate temperature readings (within 2 degrees) and after an extreme temperature change or the thermometer is dropped.

Most establishments use either a dial stem or digital thermometer. While digital thermometers are preferred because they measure temperature quickly and can be used for thin and thick foods, most digital thermometers cannot be calibrated in the kitchen and must be returned to the manufacturer for calibration. Regardless of thermometer type, use these time-tested calibration methods to check that your thermometer is reading temperatures accurately.



## Ice-Water Method

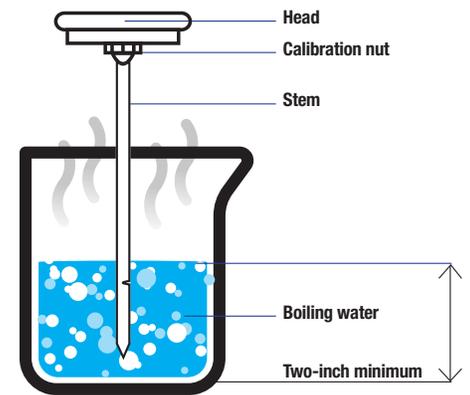
- In a container, create a mixture that is 50 percent ice and 50 percent water.
- Submerge the thermometer stem (including sensory dimple) in the water for 30 seconds, until indicator stops moving. Make sure the thermometer stem does not touch the side or bottom of the container.
- If the thermometer does not read 32 degrees Fahrenheit (0 degrees Celsius), turn the calibration nut until it reads 32 degrees Fahrenheit.



- If the thermometer does not read 32 degrees Fahrenheit and does not have a calibration nut, either push the reset button or replace the battery and retest, or replace the thermometer.

## Boiling-Point Method

- Bring a container of water to a full boil.
- Submerge the thermometer stem (including sensory dimple) in the water for 30 seconds, until indicator stops moving. Make sure the thermometer stem does not touch the side or bottom of the container.
- If the thermometer does not read 212 degrees Fahrenheit (100 degrees Celsius), turn the calibration nut until the thermometer reads 212 degrees Fahrenheit.
- If the thermometer does not read 212 degrees Fahrenheit and does not have a calibration nut, either push the reset button or replace the battery and retest, or replace the thermometer.





# Food Safety Quiz

## 1. When should you wash produce?

- A. Before cutting it
- B. Before juicing it
- C. Before cooking it
- D. All of the above

## 2. Which of the following statements about CBD is TRUE?

- A. The FDA prohibits CBD from being added to food or drink
- B. The New York City Health Code prohibits CBD from being added to food or drink
- C. The CBD prohibition includes packaged foods containing CBD
- D. All of the above

## 3. All of the following are approved packaging options for takeout food EXCEPT:

- A. Foam
- B. Uncoated paper
- C. Aluminum
- D. Rigid plastics

## 4. What are the two methods to calibrate a thermometer?

- A. Ice-water method and boiling-point method
- B. Gaseous method and boiling method
- C. Refrigeration method and boiling method
- D. Freezing method and room-temperature method

## 5. Which of the following examples of raw produce is NOT at great risk of contamination?

- A. Alfalfa sprouts
- B. Leafy greens
- C. Bananas
- D. Melons



## Did You Know?

- 1) Renewing your permit online is easy. Go to [nyc.gov/dohmhpermits](https://nyc.gov/dohmhpermits). Registration is required. Payment is by credit or debit card only.
- 2) Interested in resources the City offers to businesses? Go to [nyc.gov/business](https://nyc.gov/business).
- 3) Settle a food service establishment violation. If you receive an offer of settlement, you may save money by accepting it. Visit [nyc.gov/business](https://nyc.gov/business) and click on the Violations tab.
- 4) Your establishment will get fewer violations if more of your staff learn food safety practices. For more information about the food protection course, go to [nyc.gov/healthacademy](https://nyc.gov/healthacademy).
- 5) Need information about opening and operating a food service establishment in NYC? Visit [nyc.gov/health/foodservice](https://nyc.gov/health/foodservice).
- 6) **New:** To request a report that describes your restaurant's inspection history and provides tips on correcting and preventing violations, visit [nyc.gov/health/foodservice](https://nyc.gov/health/foodservice).