

food MATTERS

No. 24

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

Food Safety During the Holidays

Whether you are offering special menu options or hosting large parties, the holidays often bring more customers, and sometimes more food safety challenges. Practice good food safety to protect your customers from foodborne illness. Have a supervisor who has a Food Protection Certificate on duty at all times, and follow these tips.

Keep your hands clean by washing them with soap and running water for 20 seconds.

Do not touch ready-to-eat foods with bare hands.

- Use utensils — such as tongs and spoons — or deli paper or disposable gloves.
- Change gloves when going from raw to ready-to-eat foods, and whenever gloves are contaminated or torn.

Always clean and sanitize equipment and food-contact surfaces:

- After working with raw meat
- When switching from preparing one food to another
- After four hours of constant use
- After taking a break

- By following the manufacturer's instructions for your sanitizer

Don't allow bacteria to spread through cross-contamination.

- Wash fruits and vegetables under running water before cutting or serving.
- When storing foods, separate washed or prepared foods from unwashed raw foods.
- Store raw meat on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator to prevent leaking juices from dripping onto other foods.

Cook all foods to proper internal temperatures.

- Cook stuffing separately until it reaches 165 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Use pasteurized eggs when preparing egg dishes that will not reach 145 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

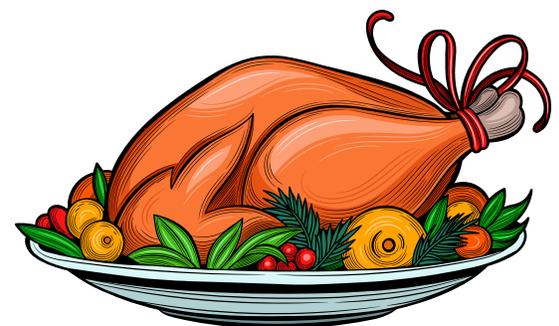
Hold food for service at proper temperatures.

- Hold cold foods at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below.
- Hold hot foods at 140 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

Cool foods in the refrigerator using proper cooling methods.

- Divide large cuts of meat or poultry into smaller pieces or portions.
- Place soup, stew, sauces and gravy in shallow pans or containers.
- Keep hot foods loosely covered; if uncovered, protect them from overhead contamination.

For more information, visit nyc.gov/health and search for [health code regulations](#).



Keep *Listeria* Out of Your Kitchen

Listeriosis is a serious infection caused by the germ *Listeria monocytogenes*. People usually get sick with listeriosis after eating contaminated food. Newborns, older adults, pregnant people or people with weakened immune systems are most at risk of infection.

Listeria commonly grows on kitchen surfaces and equipment. Recent outbreaks have identified deli slicers as a key source of *Listeria*. The slicer has many parts, some of which are difficult to clean. Food debris, grease and dirt can get trapped in hard-to-reach areas, such as blade guards and slicer handles, where germs like *Listeria* can grow.



To prevent *Listeria* from growing in your restaurant kitchen:

- Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces and equipment, such as slicers, every four hours when in use.
 - Disassemble slicers to sanitize them; wiping down a slicer is NOT a substitute for thoroughly cleaning and sanitizing it.
- Routinely inspect kitchen surfaces and equipment components to make sure they are free of cracks or other defects. Examine seals and seams of equipment, such as slicers.
- Review the [Food and Drug Administration's guidance](#) about keeping slicers safe.

Listeria Outbreak Linked to Unclean Kitchen Surfaces



The Health Department identified two customers who became sick with listeriosis after eating the same salad at the same restaurant. Listeriosis is commonly found in the environment and can grow on equipment like refrigerators, deli slicers and cutting boards.

Health Department investigators visited the restaurant, performed

an inspection and took samples — swabbing surfaces such as cutting boards, a can opener, sinks and drains. They found one sample that was positive for *Listeria*, which was identical to the *Listeria* that made the two customers sick. The restaurant closed temporarily and hired a consultant to professionally sanitize the kitchen and make sure there was no *Listeria* present.

Complying with New York City's Health Code helps prevent foodborne illness. To prevent a listeriosis outbreak at your restaurant, pay special attention to properly cleaning and sanitizing kitchen equipment. For more information, visit nyc.gov/health and search for **listeriosis**.

Add Flavor, But Not Lead

Some products, such as spices bought in or sent from other countries, can contain high levels of lead — even when it’s not listed as an ingredient. Lead is a harmful metal that can cause serious health problems, including learning and behavior problems in children, miscarriage in pregnant people and infertility.

Health Department data show that certain spices purchased abroad, especially in the countries of Georgia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Morocco, are more likely to have high levels of lead compared with similar spices purchased in the U.S.

Spices can become contaminated either intentionally (by adding lead as a coloring or to increase a product’s weight) or unintentionally (through processing on substandard equipment). The presence of lead in air, dust or soil where



food is grown or processed can also contaminate spices.

To reduce the risk of exposing your customers and staff to lead, buy your spices in the U.S.

For more information, call **311** or visit nyc.gov/hazardousproducts and click on **Foods and Spices**.

New Single-Occupant Restroom Sign Requirement

New York City law now requires that single-occupant restrooms in restaurants be gender-neutral (available to people of any sex). Restaurant operators must post and maintain a gender-neutral sign next to the door of each single-occupant restroom. There isn’t one specific sign required, but the sign posted must make it clear that the restroom is available to anyone.

For more information, read the [Department of Buildings’ fact sheet](#).





Food Safety Quiz

1. **A new NYC law requires that all single-occupant restrooms in restaurants:**

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| A. Be equipped with LED bulbs | C. Have an air hand dryer |
| B. Be available to people of any sex, with a gender-neutral sign next to the door | D. Be fitted with a bolt lock |

2. **Recent listeriosis outbreaks have been linked to what type of kitchen equipment?**

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| A. Juicers | C. Skillets |
| B. Deli Slicers | D. Stovetops |

3. **To reduce the risk of lead exposure, which products should you purchase only from U.S.-based suppliers?**

| | |
|------------|------------|
| A. Spices | C. Meats |
| B. Napkins | D. Lettuce |

4. **During the busy holiday season, keep your customers safe by:**

| | |
|--|---|
| A. Cleaning and sanitizing equipment and food contact surfaces | C. Cooking, cooling and holding foods to proper temperature |
| B. Preventing cross-contamination | D. All of the above |

5. **To prevent *Listeria* from growing in your kitchen, how often should you clean and sanitize food contact surfaces and equipment?**

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. Every four days when in use | C. Every four weeks when in use |
| B. Every four hours when in use | D. Every four months when in use |



Did You Know?

- 1) Renewing your permit online is easy. Go to 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.

- 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 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.

- 5) Need information about opening and operating a food service establishment in NYC? Visit nyc.gov/health/foodservice.

- 6) To request a report that describes your restaurant's inspection history and provides tips on correcting and preventing violations, visit nyc.gov/health/foodservice.