

FOOD SAFETY GUIDANCE

THE LAW

Food supplies, sold or provided outside of the family/domestic setting is subject to EU food law and must be safe to eat. This is regardless of whether the operation supplying or selling the food is doing so to make a profit. Food must not be 'injurious to health' or 'unfit for human consumption' (EC 178/2002, Article 14).

Most community events will include the provision of food to consumers considered vulnerable ie persons over 65, infants under 5 years old, pregnant women or people with a weakened immune system such as those with certain serious illnesses. Food providers must consider the needs of such consumers, particularly in relation to certain high-risk foods, and put suitable controls in place.

What a WI can do

WI Food activities do not have to be registered with local environmental health authority providing food is sold less frequently than once in a month.

FSA catering advice can be found at: food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/food-hygiene/charity-community-groups

FSA guidance can be found at:

food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/hall-provision.pdf

WI Food labelling recommendations:

- Product name (ie Apple & onion chutney)
- List of ingredients (descending order of weight)
- Details of ingredients that could cause allergic reaction (from the list of 14 on page 4).

Homemade cakes may be sold, but ensure that the people who have made them have followed the hygiene advice and that they are stored and transported safely.

You can sell preserves for charity purposes reusing jars provided they do not present a food safety concern. You will need to ensure that the jam jars have been washed and sterilised and have only been used for food purposes. New lids must always be used.

Packaging should

- Protect the contents from damage and contamination
- Look neat with corners tucked in and securely taped
- Have no grease spots
- Be correctly labelled
- NEVER use a stapler to seal packaging
- Add the date made, and suggested 'use by' date
- Add refrigeration details if necessary

Hazards:

a) Microbiological

Harmful bacteria, viruses, mould and yeasts (particularly if kept out of the fridge for too long) get into the kitchen via

- *raw meat and vegetables,*
- *on hands,*
- *by food handlers not washing their hands ie after visiting the toilet,*
- *pests ie rats, cockroaches, waste food, dirt and dust*

Bacteria can multiply and cause illness given the right conditions ie time, food, warmth and moisture. Food poisoning bacteria prefer food that is moist and high in protein. These foods are called 'high risk foods' and usually have a 'use by' date and require strict temperature control.

b) Contamination by objects falling in – can be harmful and unpleasant ie hair, teeth, finger nails, jewellery, pests, broken glass, pieces of packaging. These can occur at any stage of the food chain ie stones, bones twigs etc can enter during handling and preparation.

c) It may occur –

- *If raw food is treated with excessive levels of pesticides*
- *If heavy perfume is used by food handlers*
- *If cleaning products are used incorrectly and residues are left behind*
- *If chemical sprays to kill pests are left behind in any food preparation areas.*

d) According to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) about 10 people in the UK annually from allergic reactions to food. There are 14

foods most likely to cause food allergies and food should be labelled accordingly – **some are less obvious**

- Celery
- Eggs
- Molluscs ie mussels
- Peanuts
- Cereal containing gluten – wheat, barley, rye, oats
- Fish
- Mustard
- Sesame seeds
- Soybeans/soya beans
- Crustaceans ie lobster
- Lupin
- Nuts
- Sulphur dioxide
- Milk

Soya comes in different forms ie tofu, soya flour, soya milk as well as ice-cream, meat products, vegetarian products.

Lupin seeds can be used as an alternative to soya ie lupin tofu, flour and milk.

Symptoms of Food Poisoning

- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Stomach pains
- Dizziness
- Headaches

Listeria monocytogenes (Listeriosis) has increased, particularly with the over 60s and those with a weakened immune system. It can occur quite quickly, or up to 70 days later. It can last for a day or two, a couple of weeks, and can be fatal.

High Risk Foods

- Cooked meats and meat products (stock/gravy)
- Milk, cream, custard
- Eggs
- Dairy products
- Cooked poultry
- Shellfish and seafood
- Cooked rice*
- Pulses (beans, lentils, peas)

* Specific type of bacteria can survive the cooking process – NEVER reheat rice.

ASSESSMENT OF RISK

should include:-

- What are the hazards?
- What is the likelihood of the hazard happening?
- What are the consequences of the hazard happening? Who might be harmed? How?
- What is the risk level?

Management of Risk

- What measures and action should be taken to control risk?
- What risk remains after any action has taken place to control risk?

Cleaning and Disinfection

Proper cleaning helps prevent build-up of waste food and dirt.

Cleaning and disinfecting are two different things.

Cleaning uses detergents (ie washing up liquid) to remove dirt and grease. They do not kill bacteria.

Disinfectants do not kill all bacteria but reduce numbers to safe levels. You can use steam, very hot water (over 82°C), chemical disinfectants (which need to be food safe and without a strong smell).

Disinfect food contact surfaces such as work tops, equipment, chopping boards and others such as waste bins, mops and cloths, hand contact surfaces ie taps, door handles.

Your cleaning routine should include a pre-clean, using a clean cloth, hot water and sanitizer. Then rinse with hot water and a clean cloth.

Dry with paper towel or air.

Clean up spillages immediately. This prevents cross contamination and accidents.

Clean as you go. Immediately after a job and not leaving until later.

Cloths collect and spread bacteria and can easily cause cross contamination. Use disposable cloths. Use separate cloths for different tasks and disinfect regularly.

4 Simple Rules to remember the key facts of staying safe when handling food.

CLEANLINESS – COOKING – CHILLING - CONTAMINATION

1 Cleanliness

Personal hygiene - It is important to wash hands regularly, especially after visiting the toilet, after handling raw foods and before touching ready to eat food.

Remember to remove jewellery and time washing (sing happy birthday through twice}. Dry hands thoroughly. FSA approved.

- Use soap dispenser – bar soap can harbour micro-organisms
- Warm water is more effective than cold
- Dry hands on paper towel and use the towel to turn off the tap

Nail facts – we have 2-10 million bacteria between our fingertip and our elbow. The number of germs on our fingertips doubles after using the toilet. Germs can stay alive on our hands for up to 3 hours.

- (demodex folliculorum) mites and eyelash mites (demodex brevis) live in our hair follicles and reproduce in the sebaceous glands.
- A cut or wound must be covered with a highly visible blue waterproof plaster.
- Nail varnish/fake nails must not be worn.
- Protective gloves must only be used for one job and then changed. Hands must be washed before and after wear.

- Freshly laundered clothes should be worn in food preparation areas and removed when leaving.
- Separate hand washing facilities should be available with liquid hand wash. Wash hands before starting to touch food, between high risk foods and after cleaning tasks. Dry hands thoroughly on paper towel. Anti-bacterial hand gel should not be used as an alternative to hand washing.

Risk assessment – must be carried out, recorded and kept for any new food activity. This will help to ensure your event runs smoothly and safely.

Hazard – anything that might cause harm ie chemicals, electricity, open drawer, equipment.

Risk – is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

Clean up as you go. This avoids food contamination and helps prevent food poisoning. Keep the area where you work clean and tidy. This may include wiping spills, wiping down surface, removing bins, and keeping tools and surfaces to a required level of hygiene.

Everything you touch should be cleaned; doors and handles, work surfaces, equipment, light switches, cookery books, phone, (if using an i-pad this can be covered with plastic or cling film). Clothes should be disinfected daily – disposable and paper towels must be disposed of to prevent cross contamination. Boards (ideally use plastic or acrylic not wood or glass) should be washed with hot soapy water and air dried. Do not wash wooden boards as knife cut cracks can harbour bacteria.

2 Cooking

Ensure all hot food is cooked to a minimum temperature of 75°C. Food store hot (hot holding) must maintain a temperature above 63°C.

Only reheat food once – to 75°C for immediate consumption.

'Use by' Dates

- Don't use any food that passes 'use by' date even if it smells and looks fine.
- For 'use by' date to be valid it must be stored according to the instructions.
- Once food with 'use by' date is opened you must follow rules for consumption ie eat within 3 days.
- If food can be frozen then life can be extended beyond 'use by' but follow instructions carefully re defrosting and use.
- Remember, if 'use by' is tomorrow, then you must do so even if label says eat within a week of opening and you have opened today.

Best before Dates – these dates are about quality not safety.

People in 'at-risk' groups should only eat eggs, or food containing eggs that have been thoroughly cooked. This includes babies and toddlers, elderly people, pregnant women and people who are unwell.

Throwing away food – every year in the UK we throw away 7.2 million tons of food and drink that could be eaten. If food is stored properly, the 'best before' date is just a guide.

3 Chilling

If a label on packaging says food needs to be refrigerated keep it in a fridge. Put perishable food into a fridge or freezer as soon as possible after buying.

Cooked leftovers should be cooled quickly to prevent bacteria growing and then put into the fridge (putting food in shallow containers and dividing into smaller amounts will speed up the process). Never place hot food in a fridge as this will raise the temperature and put food at risk of bacterial growth.

Your fridge –

- Use a fridge thermometer to check temperature is 5°C max

- Keep raw and high risk food separate – store high risk food above raw food
- Keep food covered
- Don't store open cans of food – put food into sealed containers

Your freezer –

- Should store frozen food at least -18°C and preferably -25°C
- Storage times will vary depending on food

1 week	*
1 month	**
3 months	***
3 month/longer	****

Taste and texture of food changes if frozen for too long – it might not be so nice to eat.

The **DANGER Zone** is between 5°C and 63°C (rapid growth of bacteria)

100°C = boiling point

75°C = cooking temperature

63°C = hot holding temperature

4 Cross-Contamination

This is one of the major causes of food poisoning. It can transfer bacteria from foods – usually raw to other, transferred directly – when food touches or drips onto another, can be transferred indirectly by hands, equipment, surfaces and other utensils.

Make sure you:

- Always wash hands after touching raw foods
- Keep raw and ready to eat foods separate
- Store meat in sealable container at the bottom of the fridge so it can't drip
- Use different chopping boards/surfaces for raw, cooked, and ready to eat food
- Clean knives and utensils thoroughly after using with raw food

Colour coding – use different boards for different foods. FSA recommends:

- Red - Raw meat
- Blue - Raw fish
- Yellow - Cooked meat
- Brown - veg
- Green - salad and fruit
- White – Bakery and dairy

At large events it is important to ensure enough help is available for the numbers being catered for, that there is enough fridge space for 'at risk' food and that hot running water is available for hand washing. Always wash hands and equipment in hot soapy water.

It is important to report food poisoning.

If you think illness is caused by food from a restaurant or food business, local environmental health department need to know so they can investigate. If officers find a problem they can get the business to improve which could help prevent others getting food poisoning.