

A learning and training resource

Fact Sheet 2



Food Hygiene - The 4 Cs – Hygiene advice sheet

1. Cross-contamination Prevention

- This means stopping pathogens from getting from a source to a ready-to eat food.
- Good food hygiene means making cooking utensils, hands, hand and food contact surfaces and cleaning cloths and sponges hygienically clean at the times that matter.
- It also involves making sure your hands do not spread microbes – hand washing is key.

2. Cooking & Reheating

- Cooking is a way of killing or reducing pathogens to a safe level.
- Good food hygiene means cooking food thoroughly.

3. Chilling & Storage

- Chilling food quickly and storing it cold helps to stop bacteria growing.
- Good food hygiene is the cooling rapidly and storing of food in a cold fridge.

4. Cleanliness in the Kitchen

- Kitchens are not used just for preparing food – we also gather and socialise there. We may do the laundry and other tasks in the family home.
- Although the greatest risk is when handling and preparing food, behaviour and general cleanliness is also important.

How food can make you ill - supplementary notes for learners and trainers

What is food poisoning?

'Any disease of an infectious or toxic nature caused by or thought to be caused by consumption of food or water' (WHO definition). Foodborne illness can be caused by pathogens (bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoa), but also microbial spoilage, poisonous plants, chemicals, pesticides and physical objects (e.g. glass, plastic). A recent study suggests 17 million (up to 1 in 3) people in England and Wales suffer a gut infection every year.

Bacterial food poisoning

- Bacteria eaten via infected food, can grow in and irritate the gut causing diarrhoea or vomiting, e.g. *Campylobacter* (most common cause) or *Salmonella* (second most common cause).
- Some bacteria grow and produce a chemical (toxin) within the food. Cooking kills bacteria, but doesn't remove toxin. If the food is eaten toxins can cause illness, e.g. *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Bacillus cereus*.
- Other bacteria produce toxins once they reach the guts and multiply or form spores, e.g. *Shigella*, *Listeria*, *Clostridium perfringens* and *E. coli* O157.
- Some are infectious in very small doses, e.g. *E. coli* O15, *Campylobacter* (10-500 bacteria can make you ill).

Viral food poisoning

- Viruses cannot grow in food, but can survive. Food may be contaminated via contaminated water or infected food handler. e.g.;
- Rotavirus, the most important viral cause in children under 5 years old

- Norovirus, commonly known as 'winter vomiting disease'
- Hepatitis A and E
- Some are infectious in very small doses e.g. for norovirus, 10 virus particles may be enough

Symptoms of food poisoning

- Symptoms start 1 - 36 hours after eating food and can last up to 7 days. Note: *Campylobacter* symptoms take 2-5 days.
- Symptoms include all or some of the following: abdominal pain, diarrhoea, vomiting, nausea (feeling sick, dizzy and faint) and fever.

Sources of food poisoning in the home

All food which you buy contains microbes, but certain raw foods or ingredients are more likely to carry pathogens e.g.;

- poultry and red meat (*Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, *E. coli* O157). Packaging may also be contaminated.
- raw vegetables - potatoes, leeks, other root vegetables and unwashed greens, raw fruit, unwashed salads and frozen produce that is not ready-to-eat (e.g. peas, sweetcorn, spinach) (*E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Norovirus*, *Shigella*, *Listeria*)
- shellfish/seafood (*Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, *Hepatitis A virus*).
- eggs (unless Lion Brand) (*Salmonella*)
- some soft cheeses such as Brie (*Listeria*)
- Family members who have a gut infection e.g. norovirus
- Occasionally pets – including dogs, cats, reptiles or farm animals.

Home Hygiene - Prevention of infection at home and in everyday life.