

To learn more, contact the  
Homebased Food Operations Program



(626) 430-9855



Homebasedfoods@ph.lacounty.gov



Monday - Friday  
8:00 am - 5:00 pm



[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh)

A GUIDE TO

# Food Safety

IN A MICROENTERPRISE HOME  
KITCHEN OPERATION

Tips to prevent food contamination & foodborne illness



# Personal Hygiene



## HAND WASHING TIPS

Wash your hands often and thoroughly, paying special attention to the area around and under your fingernails.

Wash your hands:

- Before engaging in food preparation.
- In between tasks, and operations (e.g., from working with raw food to ready to eat food, removing trash).
- After using the restroom.
- After touching a body part, hair, or clothes.
- After sneezing, coughing, and or blowing your nose.
- Before and after eating or drinking.
- Whenever hands may become contaminated.

# Food Allergies

**Food allergies** occur when the immune system reacts to certain foods. Someone with food allergies may experience **adverse (mild, severe, or life threatening) reactions** to food or products that have food allergens.

While many foods can cause allergic reactions, there are **nine** foods that are considered **major allergens** per the U.S. Food & Drug Administration ([bit.ly/FDAallergens](https://bit.ly/FDAallergens)).

By properly labeling foods, allergic individuals may identify the foods and ingredients they should **avoid consuming**.

Allergens can be unintentionally added to food. Be aware of **cross-contact** when **cooking with major food allergens**. Refer to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration ([bit.ly/FDAcross-contact](https://bit.ly/FDAcross-contact)) for more information.

## MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS

- Milk
- Eggs
- Fish (e.g., bass, flounder, cod)
- Crustacean shellfish (e.g., crab, lobster, shrimp)
- Tree nuts (e.g., almonds, walnuts, pecans)
- Peanuts
- Wheat
- Soybeans
- Sesame



# Potentially Hazardous Foods

## POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS (PHF)

Foods that require **time** or **temperature control** to limit bacteria, fungi, viruses, protozoa, worms and toxic formation.

## EXAMPLES OF PHF

**Animal origin** that is raw or heat-treated.

**Plant origin** that is heat-treated or consists of:

- Raw seed sprouts
- Cut melons
- Cut tomatoes
- Garlic-in-oil mixtures

Other PHF examples include:

- Beef, Pork, & Lamb
- Poultry
- Seafood
- Tofu & Soy
- Eggs
- Dairy (Milk & Yogurt)
- Cooked rice
- Cooked beans
- Unpasteurized juice

## FOODBORNE ILLNESS

A disease caused by consuming **contaminated** food or drink. Toxins or chemicals contaminating food may cause **food poisoning**.

## COMMON SYMPTOMS

Common symptoms of a foodborne illness include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stomach cramps
- Diarrhea

# Sanitation

## GOOD HEALTH & HYGIENE

Ensure good health and hygiene by doing the following:

- Washing hands.
- Not working with exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, or linens when experiencing sneezing, coughing, runny nose, or suffering from gastrointestinal illness.
- Reporting to the Department of Public Health, **Morbidity Unit** at **(888) 397-3993** when diagnosed with one of the reportable illnesses\*.
- Wearing clean clothes/aprons.
- Wearing a hair net/hat.
- Making sure there are no open sores or cuts on hands and fingers.
  - If so, make sure proper protection is used.

**\*For a full list of reportable illness, visit:**  
[tinyurl.com/ReportableDiseaseList](http://tinyurl.com/ReportableDiseaseList)



## KITCHEN MAINTENANCE

Ensure the following:

- All food utensils are washed, rinsed, and sanitized after each use.
- Food contact surfaces and equipment are cleaned and sanitized once every four (4) hours, during food preparation.
- Food preparation/kitchen area are maintained clean.
- Refrigerator/Freezer is clean and in good condition. Cold food being held at 41°F or below.
- Approved sanitizer solution is available and maintained onsite.
- Sink is available and maintained clean when hand washing utensils or prior to washing produce.

# Food Preparation

## Dry storage

- Food items shall be stored off the floor.
- Food items, utensils, and equipment shall be stored in approved areas and protected from contamination.
- Open foods shall be stored in closed and labeled food grade containers.
- Chemicals/non-food items shall be stored separately and away from food items.

## Cross-contamination

- Prevent cross contamination by following proper food preparation practices and ensuring ready to eat foods are kept separately from raw foods.

## Thawing Methods

- Directly cook frozen food without thawing.
- Submerge frozen food in cold running water at 70°F or cooler.
- Thaw frozen food inside refrigerator overnight.
- Thaw frozen food in a microwave, followed immediately by cooking.



## Food preparation

- Food preparation should be performed in approved and clean areas.
- Ensure all produce is washed in an approved sink.
- Food items are not left out for longer than two **(2) hours**.
- Preparation should be done in a timely manner so that bacterial does not have time to multiply quickly and cause illness.

## Preparing fresh fruits and vegetables:

- Wash produce under running tap water. Fruits and vegetables with firm surfaces may be scrubbed with a brush.
- Washing produce with detergent, soap, or commercial produce wash is unnecessary and may cause illness.
- Cut away damaged or bruised areas due to bacteria that can cause illness.
- Immediately refrigerate cut fruits and vegetables for best quality and food safety.
- “Pre-washed” or “ready-to-eat” produce can be safely used without further washing.

## If commercial disinfectants are not available, Safely disinfect with bleach

**Never mix household bleach with any other disinfectants and cleaners. Mixing disinfectants can release dangerous vapors.**

1. Use regular unscented household bleach that contains **5% - 9% sodium hypochlorite**.
2. Follow the directions on the bleach bottle for preparing a diluted solution. If the bottle does not have directions, you may do the following:



Mix **5 tablespoons** (1/3 cup) of regular unscented household bleach per gallon of room temperature water.

**OR**

Mix **4 teaspoons** of bleach per quart of room temperature water.

3. Follow instructions on bottle for applying bleach solution to surfaces. If the bottle does not have instructions, you may do the following:



Leave diluted solution on the surface for at least **1 minute** before wiping or removing.

The surface should remain visibly wet during this time for disinfection. This time is also known as “contact time”.

4. Wash hands after cleaning and disinfecting.
5. Make a new diluted solution daily. Bleach solutions are not as effective after 24 hours of being mixed with water.

Use a **sanitizing bucket** and **clean towels** to sanitize and wipe down areas. **Change sanitizer every two (2) hours.**

Sanitizer solution should be used at appropriate strength and time:

- Chlorine (bleach) 100 ppm for 30 seconds.
- Quaternary ammonium 200 ppm for 1 minute.



# Steps for Warewashing and Sanitizing Dishes & Utensils

## One (1) Compartment Sink

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1. Scrape off food debris.
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2. Wash dishes and utensils with detergent and water of at least **100°F** or as indicated by the manufacturer.
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3. Rinse dishes and utensils in clear water.
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4. Fill sink with sanitizing solution. Test sanitizing solution. Immerse in approved sanitizing solution for specified contact time.
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5. Air dry.

## Two (2) Compartment Sink

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1. Scrape off food debris.
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2. Fill the first sink with water and detergent to soak dirty dishes and utensils.
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3. Rinse dishes and utensils in clear water. Drain the first sink.
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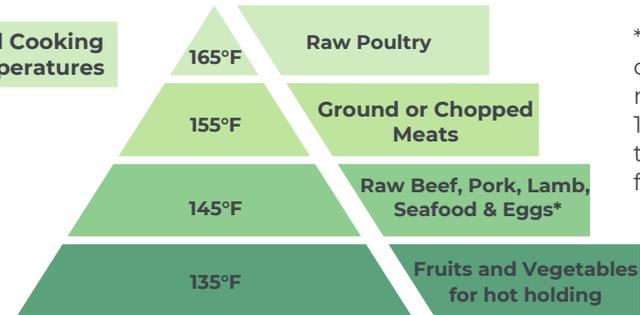
4. Fill the first sink with sanitizing solution. Test sanitizing solution. Immerse in approved sanitizing solution for specific contact time.
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5. Air dry.

If using a **dishwasher** to wash dishes, finish **by spraying and wiping clean dishes** with disinfectant spray or a diluted bleach solution which may be found on the **Safely Disinfect with Bleach** page.

# Cooking & Storage

## Food Cooking Temperatures



\*Raw eggs and foods containing raw eggs must be heated to 155°F for 15 seconds if they are not prepared for immediate service.

**Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish, or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness; especially if you have a medical condition.**

## Cooking Temperatures

Ensure that PHFs are thoroughly cooked to reduce risk of foodborne illnesses by verifying with a thermometer.



Using a food thermometer is the only sure way of knowing if your food has reached a high enough temperature to destroy germs, including foodborne illness-causing bacteria.

## Cold and Hot Held

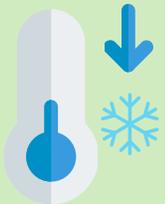
PHFs should be held at appropriate temperatures at all times:

**Cold** at **41°F** or below. **Hot** at **135°F** or above.

## Cooling Temperatures

PHFs that are cooked or heated must be cooled quickly by using any of the following approved methods:

- Placing the FOOD in shallow pans.
- Separating the FOOD into smaller or thinner portions.
- Using rapid cooling EQUIPMENT.
- Using containers that facilitate heat transfer.
- Adding ice as an ingredient.
- Using ice paddles.
- Inserting appropriately designed containers in an ice bath and stirring frequently.



Food temperatures must cool:

From **135°F to 70°F** within **two (2) hours**.

From **70°F to 41°F** within **four (4) hours**.



## Reheating Temperatures

PHFs that are cooked, cooled & reheated for hot holding must reach a temperature of **165°F** within **two (2) hours**.

# Calibrated Probe Thermometer

Ensure food is cooked, reheated, and kept at the correct temperature.

Thermometers must be:

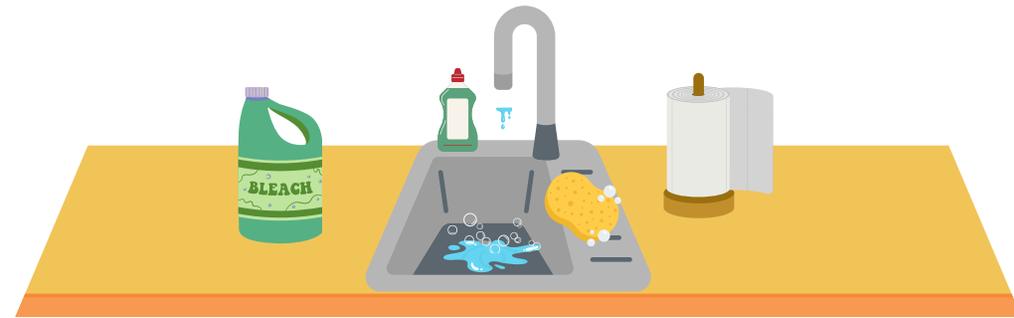
- **Calibrated weekly or when dropped and after extreme temperature changes** (e.g., measuring hot food and then frozen foods).
  - **Calibrate in ice water:** Create 50-50 ice and water mixture. Place thermometer stem into the water for 30 seconds. Ensure temperature reaches **32°F** or within plus or minus ( $\pm$ ) 2°F.
- **Routinely check** to ensure thermometer is accurate and does not need to be reset or replaced.

# Washing Meat and Poultry is NOT Recommended

May cause cross-contamination

Bacteria in raw meat and poultry juices can be spread to other foods, utensils and surfaces, causing cross-contamination.

After handling raw meat and poultry, it is important to clean and sanitize these contaminated areas that can lead to foodborne illness.



## To prevent cross-contamination:

- **Clean, sanitize, dry** and **remove** dishes from sink prior to food preparation.
- Clean sinks and countertops with **hot soapy water** and then apply a commercial or homemade **sanitizer or disinfectant** whenever they come in contact with any raw meat or poultry or their juices.
- Focus on the inner sink, any countertops surrounding the sink, knives and cutting boards and any place you set your meat or poultry or its packaging.
- Make sure commercial products are approved for food contact surfaces and follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- Wash hands immediately after handling raw meat and poultry.

