



**EXTENSION PROGRAMS**  
Agriculture and Forestry  
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Natural Resources

## Food Safety Update

### Serving Foods Safely

The key to serving safe food is to prevent temperature abuse and avoid cross-contamination. One of the easiest ways to do this is to keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.

Remember that the temperature danger zone ranges from 40° F to 140° F. If food is being held for service such as at a party or on a buffet, follow these rules to make sure it stays safe:

- ◆ Never use hot-holding equipment to reheat foods. Foods should be reheated first to 165° F and then transferred to holding equipment.
- ◆ Use only hot-holding equipment that will keep foods at 140° F or higher.
- ◆ Stir foods regularly. Stirring will help distribute heat evenly throughout the food.
- ◆ Keep food covered to retain heat and keep contaminants out.
- ◆ Measure internal food temperature at least every two hours.
- ◆ Never mix freshly prepared food with foods being held for service.

### What About Cold Foods?

Cold foods should be held at 40° F or lower. Most foods should not be stored directly on ice. Food should be placed in pans or on plates first. Whole fruits and vegetables and raw cut vegetables are exceptions to this rule. Internal food temperatures should also be measured at least every two hours.



## Servers Play a Role in Food Safety Too

Food can be contaminated on its way to the table just as easily as it can be in the kitchen. When serving meals you can follow some easy, safe serving practices to help avoid contamination. Glasses and dishes should be handled properly by never touching the food-contact area. For example, dishes should be held by the bottom or the edge. Cups should be held by their handles and glasses by the middle, bottom, or stem. Avoid stacking glassware or dishes when serving. Not only could this cause a chip or break, but also it puts the food below at risk of being contaminated by the dish above it. Flatware and utensils should be held by the handles. An ice scoop or tongs should always be used to get ice. A glass should not be used to scoop ice, since it could chip or break in the ice. Good personal hygiene is also important for avoiding contamination of foods while serving.

## Do You Know the 8 Rules of Safe Food Handling?

1. Practice good personal hygiene.
2. Prevent cross-contamination when storing and handling food during preparation.
3. Keep raw foods separate from ready-to-eat foods.
4. Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces, equipment, and utensils before and after every use.
5. Cook foods to their required minimum internal cooking temperature or higher.
6. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
7. Chill cooked food to 40° F or lower within two hours.
8. Reheat foods to an internal temperature of 165° F for fifteen seconds.



## Cleaning & Sanitizing . . . What's The Difference?

Cleaning – the process of removing food and other types of soil from a surface such as a countertop or plate.

Sanitizing – the process of reducing the number of microorganisms on a surface to safe levels.

Cleaning and sanitizing should be a two-step process. Surfaces should be cleaned and rinsed and then sanitized. Food contact surfaces should be washed, rinsed, and sanitized:

- after each use
- when you begin working with another type of food (such as switching from poultry to vegetables)
- if you are interrupted and the items you have been working with may have been contaminated
- at four-hour intervals if items are being used constantly

### To Make a Sanitizing Solution:

**Combine 2 tablespoons of bleach per gallon of warm water.**

References:

ServSafe Coursebook from the National Restaurant Association  
Culinary Essentials from Johnson and Wales University

Made Available By:

Cathy Agan, Extension Agent (FNP)  
Ouachita Parish  
and

Terri Crawford, Extension Agent (Nutrition)  
Northeast Region

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