

Food Matters in Bassendean



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Town of Bassendean food safety newsletter

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Note from the editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first edition of the *Food Matters in Bassendean*, our food safety newsletter.

The aim of the newsletter is to keep you—the food business owners and your staff—up to date with the food laws in WA and also provide you with information and updates on a variety of food safety matters and topics.

We hope you find this food safety newsletter helpful and enjoyable.

If you have any questions that you would like addressed in the newsletter, please call the Town's Health Services on (08) 9377 8009 or email: mail@bassendean.wa.gov.au

Dirty gloves = Dirty hands

Wearing disposable gloves has become standard practice in many food service operations. Some positives of food handlers wearing disposable gloves include enhanced cleanliness and potentially safer food, but when the gloves are not used properly the potential benefits are lost.

Where food handlers are wearing disposable gloves, the business operators have to ensure that the employees are trained in how to use gloves correctly. Frequently changing the gloves is critical. Gloves should be changed as often as you would normally wash your hands if you were not wearing the gloves.

For example, an employee who puts on a pair of gloves and proceeds to do everything from cutting meat, to chopping vegetables, mopping the floor, assembling a sandwich and emptying the garbage is transferring bacteria from one activity to the next and therefore the food and food contact services become contaminated and may be unsafe. **Gloves should be changed between each activity.**

Follow the tips below to help ensure the safe use of gloves in your food premises.

Tips for correct glove use

- If you handle raw meats, poultry or seafood with gloves on, don't touch ready-to-eat or cooked foods without washing hands and changing gloves.
- Change gloves when you change activity (i.e. from making sandwiches to handling money) or whenever you leave your workstation. Wash your hands between changing gloves to remove any dirt and sweat on your hands.
- Change gloves after sneezing, coughing or touching your hair or face.
- Always wear gloves if you have a bandage, infection, cut or sore and if you wear fingernail polish or fake nails.
- Always have adequate supplies of disposable gloves on the premises and encourage staff to change them regularly.





Probe thermometers are a must: a National Food Safety Standard requirement

IF YOUR FOOD premises handles potentially hazardous food, then you must have a probe thermometer at your premises, so you can measure the temperature of the food. Potentially hazardous food includes food that contains meat, seafood, dairy, eggs, cooked rice and pasta. These types of foods need to be stored either below 5°C or above 60°C.

A thermometer will let you check that potentially hazardous food has been cooked properly, is being kept at the correct temperatures in a refrigerator or display unit, and is being cooled and re-heated safely. It will also let you check that potentially hazardous food is at the correct temperatures when it arrives at your business.

Your thermometer should have a range of -50°C to 150°C so that it can measure temperatures of frozen foods through to cooked foods and it must have an accuracy of +/- 1°C .

Companies that supply electronic testing equipment or catering equipment also sell thermometers. Some of these companies are listed under 'Thermometers' or 'Catering suppliers' in the *Yellow Pages*.

How do I clean and sanitise the thermometer?

THE PROBE of the thermometer must be cleaned and sanitised before it is used to measure the temperature of different foods. If the probe is not cleaned and sanitised, food poisoning bacteria may be transferred from one food to another food. This is especially important when the thermometer will be used to measure the temperature of raw food and then cooked food, for example, a raw hamburger patty and then a cooked hamburger patty.

The probe of a thermometer can be cleaned and sanitised by using the following steps:

- wash the probe with warm water and detergent;
- sanitise the probe in a way appropriate for your thermometer (alcohol swabs are often used);
- rinse the sanitiser off if necessary (refer to the instructions on the sanitiser); and
- allow the probe to air dry or thoroughly dry it with a disposable towel.

Why wash fruit and vegetables?

CONSUMER DEMAND has resulted in an increased number of fresh-cut fruits and vegetables available on the market. These products are generally presented as ready-to-eat, which means that they are unlikely to undergo further processing prior to consumption (e.g. cooking or fermenting) which would reduce the bacterial load.

Retailers such as cafés and lunch-bars regularly prepare fruit salads and garden salads, as well as place salad in sandwiches and rolls. Food processors also prepare ready-to-eat coleslaws, packaged salad mixes etc.

Several food poisoning outbreaks in recent years, both in Australia and overseas, have been associated with the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables with the most recent involving *Salmonella* Saintpaul and papaya (paw paw).

The skin of fruit and vegetables may become contaminated either directly or indirectly from food handlers, animals, soil, manure and contaminated water or equipment. Certain commodities, such as rockmelons, carrots and mushrooms, are more likely to become contaminated due to being grown in close proximity to the ground and may be hard to clean due to the uneven surface of their skin.

It has also been demonstrated that fruit becomes contaminated when cut, as bacteria from the surface of the fruit are transferred to the flesh. It is therefore important that they are handled and processed in a manner that reduces the likelihood of contamination.



Food Law Information

Department of Health's 'Name and shame' website

IF A FOOD vendor is convicted of a breach of food safety laws, their business name could be included on a public listing on the Department of Health's website.

The website currently lists successful prosecutions that have taken place for offences contrary to the requirements of the *Food Act 2008*, *Health Act 1911*, the *Health (Food Hygiene) Regulations 1993* and the *Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code*.

Since its inception, over 40 food businesses in Western Australia have been listed on the website for various convictions, ranging from unclean premises, food not protected from contamination, vermin on the premises, food stored at unsafe temperatures, and selling food beyond its use-by-date.

It should be noted that although the proprietors of a food business may rectify the problem, they may still be prosecuted for non-compliance with the food legislation, as the offence has already been committed.

 The website which displays the Notification of Convictions, can be found at: www.public.health.wa.gov.au/2/825/2/notification_of_pm

Improvement notices may lead to legal action against food businesses

IMPROVEMENT NOTICES may be issued to a food business where an issue of non-compliance is found. The improvement notice will require the proprietor of the food business to remedy the non-compliance by a due date. If the proprietor fails to rectify the matter by the due date, the Town's Health Services may take further enforcement action such as:

- issuing Infringement notices (up to \$1000);
- issuing Prohibition Order which prohibits food handling from the premises, certain equipment or in a certain manner;
- seizing food, equipment etc; and
- cancelling the Registration of the food business.

 For more information call Health Services on 9377 8000.



Reminder
All businesses preparing food for vulnerable populations (hospitals, aged care, meals on wheels, respite care, child care centres and the like) are required to have a food safety program implemented that complies with the Standard 3.2.1.

 If you would like further information on this please contact Health Services on 9377 8000 or visit www.foodstandards.gov.au

Fines and penalties

THE FINES and penalties for offences committed under the *Food Act 2008* are much more severe than those of the old *Health (Food Hygiene) Regulations 1993* and parts of the *Health Act 1911* which it has replaced.

Examples of fines that food businesses could face under the new Food Act are:

SALE OF UNSAFE FOOD
\$100,000 AND
2 years imprisonment

HANDLING AND SALE OF UNSUITABLE FOOD

Fine \$40,000

HANDLING FOOD IN AN UNSAFE MANNER

Fine \$100,000 AND
2 years imprisonment

FALSE DESCRIPTION OF FOOD

Fine \$100,000
AND 2 years imprisonment



Simple tips for preventing contamination in your coolroom and fridge

Don't

- Don't place steaming hot foods straight into the coolroom.
- Don't open the coolroom door too frequently.
- Don't over stack the coolroom—cold air won't circulate properly.
- Don't use tea towels to cover food in the coolroom.

Do's

- Do keep all food covered, labelled, dated and in food grade containers.
- Do store cooked food above raw foods.
- Do rotate stock—first in, first out.
- Do clean your coolroom regularly and keep in good working order.
- Do monitor the temperature of the food in your coolroom.

Norovirus

NOROVIRUS is often associated with the sudden onset of projectile vomiting. Other symptoms are the same as bacterial infections (i.e. diarrhoea and vomiting, often with fever).

Routes of transmission include poor hand washing after using the toilet but transmission may also occur if an infected person vomits near other people or food. This is because the virus can drift through the air in tiny particles of vomit and land on food and food contact surfaces, or infect people directly.

Destroying any food that may have become unsafe, and cleaning up and disinfecting thoroughly over a wide area after someone has been sick in or near a food handling area is therefore very important. This should be done as a precaution even if Norovirus is not known to be the cause.



The virus can be difficult to remove, especially from soft furnishings. Anyone who has household contact with someone infected with Norovirus should inform their manager.

Is your meat safe to eat?

It's fine for people to eat steaks and other whole cuts of beef and lamb rare, as long as the outside has been properly cooked or 'sealed'.

Steaks are usually sealed in a frying pan over a high heat. It's important to seal meat to kill any bacteria that might be on the outside. You can tell that a piece of meat has been properly sealed because all the outside will have changed colour.

It's okay to serve beef and lamb joints rare too, as long as the joint is a single piece of meat, not a rolled joint (made from different pieces of meat rolled together) but pork joints and rolled joints shouldn't be served rare. To check these types of joint are properly cooked, put a skewer into the centre of the joint. The juices shouldn't have any pink or red in them. Remember, the following types of meat should not be eaten rare:

- pork;
- burgers, sausages, chicken nuggets;
- rolled joints; and
- kebabs.

This is because these types of meat can have bacteria all the way through them, not just on the outside. So if they aren't properly cooked then any bacteria in the meat might not be killed and result in food poisoning.

