

Glossary

Absorbent Has the capacity to soak up a liquid or other substances.

Bacillus cereus A pathogenic micro-organism, which produces a toxin in food. If contaminated food is eaten, the onset of food poisoning is quick and generally causes vomiting.

Bacteria Single celled micro-organisms found in the environment that multiply quickly under the right conditions. Some bacteria can cause disease while other 'friendly' bacteria can help protect the body.

Beard snood A small net, similar to a hair net, worn to cover a beard and prevent hair from falling into food.

Best before date A date assigned to foods with a shelf-life of two years or less. It may be safe to eat foods after the 'best before' date, but they will have lost peak flavour and nutritional qualities and attributes.

Binary fission A process of cell division by which a parent cell asexually reproduces to form two daughter cells.

Campylobacter A bacterium found in the intestines of many types of animals and the most common bacterial cause of diarrhoeal illness.

Carrier of bacteria A person or animal who harbours, and may pass on, harmful bacteria, even though that person may show no signs of illness.

Chemical contamination The contamination of food by chemicals.

Clostridium perfringens A spore forming bacterium found in our intestines and the natural environment that may cause food poisoning if cooked food is cooled too slowly thus allowing the germination of spores

Cook To prepare food for eating by applying heat for example boiling, baking, frying, microwaving etc.

Contamination The presence of any harmful or objectionable substance in food.

Control measure Any action or activity that can be used to prevent or eliminate a food safety hazard or to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Core temperature The temperature of the middle or thickest part of food.

Cross contamination The contamination of food caused by the transfer of harmful bacteria from spoiled to unspoiled foods or from hands to food.

Critical control point A step in food production at which control can be applied, which is essential to prevent or eliminate a food safety hazard or reduce it to an acceptable level.

Danger zone The range of temperatures between 5°C and 63°C at which most bacteria multiply rapidly.

Date marking All pre-packaged foods come with a date indication on the label. These are either 'use by' or 'best before' dates.

Diarrhoea Three or more usually frequent discharges of excessively fluid stools within a 24 hour period, generally caused by bacteria, parasites or viral infections such as gastroenteritis.

Direct cross contamination Where contamination occurs when there is direct contact between the source of bacteria and the food.

Detergents A purifying or cleansing substance made from chemical compounds with oil-dissolving effects, which removes grease and dirt but does not kill bacteria.

Disinfectants Chemicals that reduces pathogenic microbes to safe levels but do not remove grease and dirt. Less effective in the presence of organic matter.

Due diligence In the example of a food business, the process by which it must be able to demonstrate that it has done everything within its power to safeguard consumer health.

Durable Long lasting, enduring.

***Escherichia coli* (E. coli) 0157** A pathogenic foodborne bacteria that causes gastrointestinal illness that occurs within five days of eating contaminated food.

Food Any substance, usually of plant or animal origin that can be consumed and metabolised by an organism to produce energy and stimulate growth.

Food allergy An intolerance to certain types of foods, causing the consumer to become ill after eating.

Food-borne disease A disease or illness caused by micro-organisms carried by food or water.

Food-borne illness An illness that occurs when food containing harmful bacteria is ingested.

Food handler A proprietor, employee or any other person who works in or in connection with, a food business where food is processed, prepared, stored, distributed or exposed for sale.

Food hygiene The practice of ensuring food is safe, sound and wholesome through its protection from contamination, the prevention of bacterial multiplication and the destruction of harmful bacteria.

Food pest Any creature that lives on, or in, human food causing damage or contamination (or both) to that food. Pests are a source of food contamination.

Food poisoning An illness which occurs usually between 1 and 36 hours after eating contaminated or poisonous food.

Food safety The protection of the food supply chain from hazards or contamination that may occur during all stages of food production and handling

Food spoilage An undesirable change in colour, flavour, odour or texture of food due to the gradual process of microbial growth, usually as a result of improper temperature controls.

Freeze The process of preserving foods by subjecting them to extreme cold, as in a freezer. This process does not kill bacteria, but slows or stops their multiplication.

Freezer burn. A toughening of food (and often a change in colour) which occurs when food has been exposed in the deep freeze. Usually occurs on protein foods such as fish, meat or poultry.

Fungi Any parasitic plant that reproduces by spores and lack chlorophyll, leaves, true stems and roots. Examples include mould, mushrooms and yeast.

Gastroenteritis An illness that causes the lining of the gastrointestinal tract to become swollen, causing vomiting, diarrhoea and fever. Gastroenteritis is contracted by coming into contact with contaminated foods and beverages or with another person who is infected. Regular handwashing helps significantly in preventing it.

HACCP Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point.

Hazard A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm

Hazard analysis The process of collecting and evaluating information on hazards and conditions leading to their presence to decide which are significant for food safety and therefore should be addressed in the HACCP plan.

Impervious Not able to be penetrated, as by water, light, heat etc.

Indirect cross-contamination The process by which bacteria are transferred from the source to the food via a vehicle.

Listeria The harmful bacteria found in contaminated foods such as cheese, meat, seafood, milk and vegetables. Listeria causes the human illness listeriosis.

Low risk foods Foods in which the risk of bacterial multiplication is low.

Microbes (or Micro-organisms) Tiny living organisms, including bacteria, viruses and fungi which can be seen only with the aid of a microscope. Some microbes can cause infectious disease while certain microbes can grow on food and cause food spoilage.

Microwave A method of cooking food using microwaves where heat (not the microwaves) kills the bacteria and the food cooks from the outside inwards.

Moisture content The amount of water contained in food. Bacteria and fungi thrive in moist foods.

Mould A fine and usually furry growth of microscopic fungi found on food objects and surfaces exposed to moist air.

Pathogen Any micro-organism capable of producing disease, such as certain bacteria, parasites, viruses or fungi.

Pathogenic bacteria Strains of bacteria which cause illness in humans and can be difficult to detect.

Perishable foods Foods that are easily susceptible to spoilage unless properly stored.

Personal hygiene The process of keeping the body including the hair and especially the hands clean, avoiding habits such as nose picking and nail biting, wearing clean, protective outer clothing and appropriate headgear.

Pesticide A chemical used to kill unwanted organisms, such as insects, worms or rats. Pesticides are often hazardous to humans as well, causing conditions such as nerve damage.

pH scale A scale ranging from 0 to 14 that is used to measure the acidity or alkalinity of substances. A pH of less than 7 is acidic while a pH greater than 7 is alkaline, with 7 being neutral. The human stomach has a PH value of roughly 2.

Physical contamination The contamination of food by foreign objects (anything that is found in the food that should not be there).

Potable A term most commonly associated with water, meaning the water is free of harmful germs and therefore drinkable.

Preservation The process of preventing organic matter from spoiling or decaying, usually by refrigeration, canning or salting.

Refrigeration To make or become cold.

Resistance The natural ability of an organism to defend itself against disease.

Rinse The removal of dirt and detergent from an object

Risk The likelihood that a hazard will cause harm.

Salmonella The bacteria found in contaminated food such as poultry, meat and eggs that causes the human illness, salmonellosis.

Sanitise To make a surface or utensil free of harmful levels of disease causing micro-organisms or harmful contaminants, usually by wiping, scrubbing or soaking the surface in a sanitising agent, such as bleach.

Sanitisers A combined detergent and disinfectant that both removes organic matter and reduces the microbial load to acceptable levels.

Spoilage bacteria Bacteria which cause food to rot or perish and signs of which can be readily detected.

Spores The tiny reproductive cells of lower organisms such as fungi, algae and certain bacteria. Spores have thick walls which means they are highly resistant to heat and dehydration and capable of surviving through cooking. When conditions are right spores are capable of growing into new organisms and because of this they increase the risk of food poisoning.

Staphylococcus aureus Bacteria commonly found in custard or cream-filled baked goods, ham, poultry, eggs, potato salad, cream sauces and sandwich fillings. They are found on our skin and food handlers can contaminate food during preparation. Symptoms of eating contaminated food include severe nausea, vomiting, cramps and diarrhoea.

Sterilants Cleaning substances that kill all micro-organisms.

Susceptible groups The term for vulnerable groups in society including the elderly, the very young i.e. babies and toddlers, pregnant women and individuals who are immunocompromised.

Temperature The intensity of heat or cold of a substance, room, country or environment. In the area of cooking, temperature is usually expressed in terms of units of degrees on a thermometer.

Toxins Poisonous substances, particularly those formed by pathogenic bacteria, which are capable of causing disease when brought into contact with other living organisms. Toxins may survive high and low temperatures, salty conditions and a vacuum (absence of air) and can lead to rapid food poisoning.

Use by date A visual mark indicating to consumers the last day that food will be at peak flavour and quality. Food that is past its 'use by' date can pose a health risk.

Virus Ultra microscopic parasites of animals, plants and bacteria. Most viruses cause disease.