



FOOD SAFETY & SANITATION

April 2008
Volume 6, Issue 3

The Everclean Report

Special Interest Articles:

- Equipment Thermometers 101
- Meat & Poultry Colors Q & A
- Foodborne Illness Overview

Equipment Thermometers 101

A critical factor in controlling bacteria in food is controlling temperature. Pathogenic microorganisms grow in the danger zone, between 42 and 139°F. An equipment thermometer is specially designed to measure the temperature of the air in a refrigerator, freezer, oven, or hot holding unit. Thermometers should be conspicuously placed and the sensor should be in the warmest part of a cold unit and the coolest part of a hot unit.

Refrigerators & Freezers

- An equipment thermometer should be kept in a refrigerator/freezer to monitor the temperature at all times.
- Refrigerators should maintain temperatures no higher than 41°F.
- Freezers should maintain temperatures at 0°F.

To measure the temperature in a refrigerator:

- Place a thermometer in a glass of water in the middle of the refrigerator.
- Wait 5 to 8 hours.
- If the temperature is not 38-41°F, adjust the refrigerator temperature control.
- Check again after 5 to 8 hours.

To measure the temperature in a freezer:

- Place a thermometer between frozen food packages.
- Wait 5 to 8 hours.
- If the temperature is not 0-2°F, adjust the freezer temperature control.
- Check again after 5 to 8 hours.

Ovens & Hot Holding Units

A thermometer can be placed in the equipment to verify that it is heating to the desired temperatures.

To measure the temperature of an oven or hot holding unit

- Hang a thermometer from a rack in the center of the unit.
- Set the unit to a certain temperature and allow it to preheat.
- Once the unit has reached the set temperature, open the door and read the thermometer.
- Check the temperature again after 5 minutes.
- If the unit is not maintaining the set temperature, the thermostat will have to be adjusted by service personnel.

Meat & Poultry Colors Q & A

Q: What is the usual color of raw meat?

A: Fresh cut meat is purplish in color; once oxygen reacts with the meat, a bright red color forms. The interior of the meat may be grayish-brown due to the lack of oxygen penetrating below the surface.

Q: Does a change in color indicate spoilage?

A: Color changes are normal for fresh or frozen products. An off odor and/or a sticky, slimy or tacky texture indicates spoilage.

Q: What causes iridescent colors on meats?

A: Meat contains iron, fat, and other compounds. When light hits meat, it splits into colors. There are various pigments in meat compounds that can give it an iridescent or greenish cast when exposed to heat and processing.

Q: What are the white dried patches on frozen meat and poultry?

A: White dried patches indicate freezer burn. The areas with freezer burn will be dried out and tasteless and can be trimmed away if desired. The product is still safe to eat.

Q: What is the usual color of raw poultry?

A: Poultry varies from a bluish-white to yellow. Younger poultry has less fat under the skin and can cause the bluish cast.

Q: What causes the differences in color of raw ground poultry?

A: A darker pink means more dark meat was used. A lighter pink means more white meat or skin was included.

Foodborne Illness Overview

A foodborne illness is any illness that comes from food that is eaten. Safe food handling can control the risk of someone getting sick.

Annual statistics for the United States -- 76 million people ill -- 325,000 hospitalized -- 5,000 die.

People at a higher risk -- infants & young children -- pregnant women -- older adults -- people with weakened immune systems.

Key elements in controlling foodborne illness -- **TIME** (reducing time food is in the danger zone) -- **TEMPERATURE** (cooking/holding foods at required temperatures) -- **CROSS-CONTAMINATION** (proper storage & cleaning) -- **PERSONAL HYGIENE** (handwashing & excluding ill employees).

Any comments or questions should be directed to info@evercleanservices.com

Everclean Services

Phone:
(877) 532-5326
(818) 874-1290

Fax:
(818) 865-0465

E-Mail:
info@evercleanservices.com