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The Everclean Report

Handling Raw Meat, Poultry, and Seafood

Special Interest Articles:

- Handling Raw Meat, Poultry, and Seafood
- Ten Rules of Food Safety At Your Restaurant
- Cutting Boards

Did you know that improper handling of raw meat, poultry, and seafood could set the stage for cross-contamination? Bacteria present on the surfaces of some high protein foods, especially of animal origin, can be inadvertently spread to other foods in storage and throughout the facility. By separating raw meat, poultry, and seafood from other foods in your walk-in you can prevent any cross-contamination.

To prevent juices from raw meat, poultry, or seafood from dripping onto other foods in your refrigerator, place these foods in covered containers. It is especially important to store these types of products separate and below any ready-to-eat foods.

Once you move the same foods out of the refrigerator for preparation, keep up the separation. Use separate cutting boards for raw

meat, poultry, seafood, and produce. If you do not have separate cutting boards be sure to wash the cutting board before you use it for another type of food.

Always wash your hands frequently during and after working with these foods. Remember to wash, rinse and sanitize cutting boards, dishes, and utensils after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, and unwashed fresh produce. Never use utensils for cooked or ready-to-eat food that previously was in contact with raw meat, poultry, or seafood, bacteria from the raw food could contaminate the cooked or ready-to-eat food.

If you follow these guidelines you can go a long ways toward conquering the bacteria that could cause food borne illness.

Ten Rules of Food Safety at Your Restaurant

As a professional in a food service facility, we should think of the very basic food safety concepts that every crew member should aspire to learn. The first 3 apply to anyone who serves food, from a bag of popcorn to a full course meal. As chefs or managers, if we can "set the example" by repeating good food safety practices visibly to the crew, it will help them understand how important it is to the success of your facility. Therefore:

1. Train every employee about correct handwashing, monitor it, and use positive reinforcement.
2. Be a safe food handler. Restrict or send home crew members that are ill, so they do not handle foods. Require strict personal hygiene from all employees.
3. Enforce "no bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods" and train your staff exactly what that is. In states where barehand contact is allowed, follow company policy & reread 1 & 2.
4. Identify all potentially hazardous foods on your menu and keep them as cold as possible during storage and preparation.
5. Obtain food supplies from reputable approved sources.
6. Teach all crew members to use thermometers properly.
7. Avoid cross-contamination of raw and ready-to-eat foods by hands, utensils and equipment.
8. Cook and heat-process food to above recommended minimum temperature.
9. Rapidly chill hot food to below 41°F.
10. Reheat food quickly to 165° F + (hold for 15 seconds).

Cutting Boards

Maintenance of the proper condition and sanitation of cutting boards is a key step in delivering safe and wholesome foods to our guests.

Cutting boards must be washed, sanitized, and should be visually clean prior to use. Cutting boards with deep cuts or divots should not be used (bacteria can grow in these cuts and contaminate product). All cutting boards must be NSF approved. Cutting board mats are the only approved type of mats to place under the cutting board to prevent them from slipping.

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