



The Food Forum

February 2024

McDonough County Health Department

Volume 12



Business hours:

Monday—Thursday
7:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

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* Chlorine or Quaternary Ammonium Compound test strips are available for purchase at \$8 per vial at our office.

Bad Blood

Proper Wound Care

A frustrating moment for most food service workers is when they acquire a cut in the kitchen. Whether it's from a knife, the edge of a can, or from scraping it against a surface, it is important to take the necessary steps to avoid contamination of food from blood.

The first thing to do is stop what you are doing and prioritize the injury at hand. Even if you don't see blood right away, it is still important to immediately address the situation. If dictated by company procedure, report the injury to your manager or direct supervisor. Communicate what happened and they can help you decide if the wound can be cared for at the establishment or if a doctor's care is needed.

The next steps are washing the wound to avoid infection and then covering the wound with a sterile bandage. Simply putting a glove over the wound is not enough to keep food safe. A bandage will not only provide an additional layer of protection, it will also aid in stopping the wound from bleeding which in turn will help the injury heal faster. Once bandaged, put on a fingercot or a disposable glove which will help keep the bandage from falling off into food during food preparation.

With the wound taken care of, it is time to turn your attention back to the food. Take care to examine the station at which you were working when the injury occurred. Discard any food

on your cutting board as it may have been contaminated upon injury. Blood can be dangerous if it is allowed to contaminate food or utensils.

Lastly is the cleaning and sanitization of all utensils and food contact surfaces in that prep area. Similar to food pathogens, even if you cannot see blood, contamination could have occurred. It is also a good idea to clean and sanitize the sink and faucet where the wound was washed.

Everyone gets injured on the job at some point. Knowing the proper response to these events will not only help keep you safe, but it will keep your customers as well.

Dear Reader

An introduction to our spring intern, Esther Alorkpa:

I am currently pursuing my master's degree at WIU. In the world, environmental factors account for approximately twenty-five percent of all deaths and disease loads. I'm thrilled to work as a cooperative team member of the Environmental Health Department, managing safety and health measures that ensure food service and retail establishment compliance. I have the opportunity to assist the environmental health team on food inspections.

Call Anaiah to register!



2024 CLASSES	DATE(S)	FEE	LOCATION
Food Handler	W 2/28 2-4pm	\$10	MCHD
Certified Food Protection Mgr	T 3/19 8am-4:30pm & W 3/20 1-4pm	\$130	MCHD
HACCP	W 4/3 2pm	FREE! Nat'l Public Health Week	MCHD
Food Handler	Th 4/11 10am-12pm	FREE! Nat'l Public Health Week	Greenbriar, Bushnell
Food Handler	T 9/10 10am-12pm	\$10	MCHD
Certified Food Protection Mgr	T 10/1 8am-4:30pm & W 10/2 1-4pm	\$130	MCHD
CFPM exam proctoring	by appt.	\$100	MCHD

TCS Foods defined

TCS Foods are Time / Temperature Control for Safety foods that must be kept at/below 41°F or at/above 135°F and used within a specified time frame to prevent the growth of foodborne illness causing microorganisms.

Item _____
Prepared Date _____
Use By _____ Emp _____
M T W TH F SA SU



IDPH has a **NEW** guide for those moving from small processor/cottage food to wholesaler: [manufactured-food-guide-selfinspection-checklist.pdf](#)

Blank Space

For years, your health inspectors have been discussing the importance of labeling TCS foods in your food service facility. *Blank spaces* on your foods and temperature logs are no good- *write their name* (and date)!

Labeling items is important so they are not mistaken for other items, which can be especially problematic if the food or beverage resembles a chemical or cleaning substance, or when serving diners with food allergies.

The 7-day date labeling to minimize the possibility of listeria growth & contamination is our main focus here. Listeria is a cold-loving bacteria and

grows well at refrigeration temperatures unlike most other bacteria (whose growth slows drastically with cold temperatures).

On many occasions in the past year, we have seen foods that had date labels that had long since passed. Sometimes, during discussions with the food handlers, we find that they were frozen for later use after they were dated and then recently thawed. While this practice can help limit food waste, the label on the food must reflect the total 7 days. Freezing food causes bacteria to go dormant (or inactive), but when freezer temperatures reach 14°F or more, those

dormant bacteria become active again and will multiply. Does your standard food labeling procedure need to be updated?

Example: deli meat was opened 1/1. Half of the container was frozen that same day, the remainder labeled for use by 1/7 and placed in the refrigerator. When the frozen deli meat is pulled for thawing in the refrigerator, that is considered day 2. So if it is pulled on 1/7 to thaw, it would need to be used by 1/12. Freezing opened or cooked foods does not restart the 7-days at day 1!

It is important to know how many days it was open prior to freezing to determine the 7th day so you can continue to serve safe, quality food.

Speak Now

Click on the following link or scan the QR code to participate in our annual Health Needs Assessment & Community Survey. We are looking for feedback on how we can better serve YOU, our community members, so **Speak Now!**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G6FYBBX>

**Did you notice a theme in this year's Food Forum?**

If so, email us your guess at mchd@mchdept.com by 3/7/24 to be entered in a prize drawing for a digital thermometer!

... Ready For It?

Are you ready for the next emergency? Are you ready for a natural disaster? The summer of 2023 derecho and severe weather demonstrated that business operations can be upended in moments.

Prepare now for power outages-

Have digital thermometers on hand to check and log temperatures every 2 hours, have contact information handy to notify management, your service provider, and the McDonough County Health Department of the power outage. Prepare for the possibility of a long-term outage: know contact information to obtain generators or refrigerated trucks to minimize product loss.

Work ahead of water service interruptions-

Sometimes emergencies result in other service interruptions such as loss of water service or boil orders. While it is not ideal to operate without water service, it is possible with proper preparation. You will be unable to offer any water product that may be contaminated; this includes ice, brewed coffee or tea, and soda. You will need to supply bottled water for all drink preparation, handwashing, dishwashing, sanitizer preparation, food preparation and cooking. Know ahead of time from whom, how, and where you will obtain safe water and ice supplies.

Emergency communication-

In the event of natural disasters and emergencies, there may be internet and cell phone service interruptions that make current methods of communication with staff impractical. The

team apps that make communication convenient now might not be available without internet service. Have a team communication plan to keep your staff safe and informed during your emergency response.

Do you know who is available for all emergencies to answer questions and provide assistance & guidance to help you operate?

The McDonough County Health Department is prepared to help you respond to emergency situations, service interruptions and natural disasters. Call our office for all service interruptions. We will offer guidance to help you stay open when possible, know when to close, perform re-opening inspections, and help you keep your team and your food safe. Call us: (309) 837-9951 and for after hours emergencies: (309) 333-3978.

Shake It Off

“Just blow on it.” “*Shake it off.*” These are phrases commonly heard when food has fallen on the floor, in encouragement to consume it. Researchers from Rutgers have disproven the widely accepted idea that it’s okay to eat food that has fallen on the floor as long as it is within five-seconds.

Their findings, which show that bacteria may contaminate foods that have fallen on the floor in less than a second, appear online in the American Society for Microbiology’s journal, *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*.

The researchers tested watermelon, bread, bread and butter, and gummy candy on four different surfaces: stainless steel, ceramic tile, wood, and carpet. Not surprisingly, watermelon had the most contamination, gummy candy the least. Moisture content seemed to be the most important factor in the transfer of bacteria from surfaces. Bacteria move along with the moisture; “the wetter the food, the higher the risk of transfer,” said Donald Schaffner. Also, longer food contact times usually result in the transfer of more bacteria from each surface to food.”

So, if it can’t be rinsed off, throw that food in the trash!

