



Advice from the NSW Food Authority

Useful contacts and resources:

NSW Food Authority

Visit our website to download fact sheets and get detailed information: www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
Or call the Contact Centre: **1300 552 406**

NSW School Canteen Association

Provides information for school canteens on a range of areas, visit: www.schoolcanteens.org.au

Food Safety Information Council

Visit the FSIC website for posters and fact sheets: www.foodsafety.asn.au

Food Standards Australia New Zealand

Visit the FSANZ website for information on the national food standards and food code including "Safe Food Australia" user guides: www.foodstandards.gov.au

Looking After Our Kids (Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing)

An excellent video and handbook is available. Call: **02 6289 5131** or email: foodsafety@health.gov.au

Anaphylaxis Australia

This organisation can give you detailed information on managing food allergies. Call: **1300 728 000** or visit: www.allergyfacts.org.au



What's the best way to display food?

- 1) All food served in the school canteen must be wrapped or covered when on display.
- 2) Unpackaged self service food must have tongs, spoons, bags or paper ready for students to serve themselves without touching the food directly.
- 3) Hot foods like pies, pizzas and pasta must be kept hot (60°C or above) when displayed.
- 4) Similarly, cold foods like sandwiches, salads and milk drinks must be kept cold on display (5°C or below).

QUICK HYGIENE CHECKLIST!



Make sure you and your staff ...

- do not prepare foods for others if you are ill and remember to cover up wounds
- always wash hands thoroughly with warm soapy water and dry thoroughly with paper towels before and after touching food
- tie hair back, remove or cover jewellery and wear clean protective clothing (aprons / hair nets / hats).

Make sure your canteen ...

- keeps free from vermin and animals (close doors, use windows with screens, clean equipment and dispose garbage effectively!)
- keeps raw meat in sealed containers at the bottom of the fridge so juices don't run onto other foods
- keeps cold food cold and hot food hot
- stores ready to eat foods above vegetables and meat in the fridge
- always sanitises or changes chopping boards and utensils every time they prepare a new food type.



FOOD SAFETY IN SCHOOL CANTEENS

Advice from the NSW Food Authority



Why is Food Safety so important?

We are surrounded by food every day so it's easy to forget food can also be potentially very dangerous if it's not handled, prepared and stored correctly.

Bacteria can multiply in food and make us extremely ill – more than 5 million Australians are estimated to suffer from food borne illness, better known as food poisoning each year. Children are particularly vulnerable so it's essential that school canteen staff practice safe food handling and preparation.

What is the NSW Food Authority?

As Australia's first completely integrated food regulation agency, it is responsible for food safety across the entire NSW food industry – from primary production to point of sale through to educating consumers about safe food practices in the home.



How is the NSW Food Authority involved with school canteens?

The NSW Food Authority (or your local council) may inspect your school canteen to ensure its compliance with the Food Standards Code, especially the food safety standards 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

This fact sheet aims to answer common questions received from school canteens but you can obtain more detailed information by calling **1300 552 406** or visiting www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au.

Have you 'notified' your school canteen?

National food law, Food Safety Standards 3.2.2, requires that all food businesses in NSW (including school canteens) 'notify' the NSW Food Authority of their food activity details.

Notification of food businesses allows the Authority to maintain a close relationship with all businesses. For example, it means we can keep you informed and updated on changes to food legislation.

Canteens can notify as food businesses in 2 ways:

- 1) For free, just follow the instructions at www.foodnotify.nsw.gov.au or
- 2) Ring **1300 650 124** to obtain a paper form (a \$55 submission charge will apply).

For more information please refer to the "Food Business Notification" fact sheet which is available at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au or by calling **1300 552 406**.





HANDLING POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS

School canteens must be particularly careful when handling potentially hazardous foods. Foods to watch out for include raw and cooked meats, dairy products, seafood, unpasteurised juices, ready packed salads and vegetables, cooked rice, pasta and products containing raw eggs.

This does not mean you can't use them, only that you must be extra careful when preparing, cooking, serving and storing these foods.

Schools need to be aware of students who are allergic to certain foods, such as peanuts and peanut products. These foods should be kept separate or even excluded from the menu. You can get more information about this at:

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/conditions/anaphylaxis/index.php or www.allergyfacts.org.au



Can canteens sell foods that are prepared or cooked at home?

A food business is defined as any food preparation, food storage or food distribution activity which handles food for sale.

All food businesses must be 'notified' to the NSW Food Authority before they start operating and there are penalties for food businesses which are not properly notified. **That means that**

the domestic kitchen as well as the school canteen must be notified to the Authority and both must comply with food safety standards generally.

Preparing food at home for sale in a canteen (or elsewhere) must also be approved by your local Council. Some Councils may not approve home-based operations involving high risk foods.

Remember, if the handling of food for sale in school canteens occurs in a domestic kitchen there are also special food safety issues to consider. These relate to kitchen design and construction, food handling and hygiene, product labelling and record keeping. The NSW Food Authority or your local Council will be able to help you with this.

For more information please refer to the "Home based food business" fact sheet which is available by calling 1300 552 406 or by visiting www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au.

What training should the canteen manager take?

It is the canteen manager who is responsible for ensuring that all food handlers (whether staff or volunteers) are confident and competent to undertake the task required of them. Managers should show food handlers what to do and supervise them until they are comfortable doing the task. Don't assume they will know what to do. Check first!

Canteen managers would benefit from attending an accredited food hygiene training course. Most local colleges or TAFEs will offer courses in food hygiene and safety. You can search for these via the TAFE website www.tafensw.edu.au/howex/simpleSearch.do – Look for courses such as 3405 Workplace Hygiene (food handlers), that cover: temperature control, understanding bacteria and how to prevent their growth, cross contamination, personal hygiene and handling chemicals. The NSW School Canteen Association may also be able to recommend good courses in your area.

Many canteens offer induction evenings or training sessions for staff and volunteers at the beginning of each term. It's a good idea to give out this fact sheet and ask them to read through the Hygiene chapter in the new *Fresh Ideas for a Healthy School Canteen* folder. Lots of schools also show the video *Looking after our kids* which you can order from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.



What do volunteers need to know?

Food handlers should have knowledge and skills appropriate to the type of food they are receiving, preparing, storing and serving, particularly if it is potentially hazardous (eg raw meat, eggs etc) or is not going to be thoroughly cooked immediately prior to consumption.

All volunteers should have a basic understanding of:

- why bacteria grow
- how to avoid cross contamination
- personal hygiene requirements
- temperature control (for cooking, reheating, cooling, defrosting, storing and displaying foods).

Fact sheets explaining all these topics in more detail are available from the NSW Food Authority (www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au or call 1300 552 406). Refer also to the *Fresh Ideas for a Healthy School Canteen* folder.

How should bench tops and other items be sanitised?

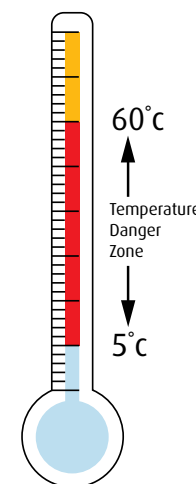
Cleaning an item only removes the dirt and grease from it – it does not kill the bacteria hiding underneath!

To sanitise you can use either hot water or a bottled chemical sanitiser.

Follow these steps:

- 1) Scrape waste off equipment and surfaces into the garbage
- 2) Wash bench top/item with warm, soapy water (the water should be hot enough for you to need to wear gloves)
- 3) Either soak item for at least a minute in very hot water or spray the bench top with a sanitising solution (following the instructions on the label)
- 4) Leave to drain, air dry or wipe with paper towels.

Remember; the same methods should be used for your utensils and chopping boards too!



How do I reheat food safely?

If you have cooked food that you aren't going to eat straight away, cool it as quickly as possible and then store it in the fridge. Don't keep leftovers longer than 2 days.

When you reheat food, make sure that it's piping hot all the way through (at least 60°C). Try using a thermometer to check. If the food is only warm it might not be safe to eat.

Remember; don't reheat food more than once!

How do I defrost food safely?

Food can be defrosted in 2 ways. If you have time to plan ahead then you can defrost foods that are covered or in a container in the fridge. Smaller amounts of foods can be defrosted in the microwave. Remember to use the defrost setting.

Remember; never defrost foods on bench tops!

How do I cool food safely?

Remove food from the oven and allow the temperature to drop to 60°C. Ideally this should be done in less than 2 hours. Once this temperature is reached, ladle food into shallow containers, cover with a lid or clean paper and place the containers into the fridge to cool. Make sure they are stored above your raw meat and vegetables so they are safely separated.

REMEMBER THE 2 HOUR RULE

- Bacteria that cause food poisoning grow rapidly between 5°C and 60°C (the temperature danger zone).
- Food left in the temperature danger zone (eg out of the fridge or food warmer) for longer than 2 hours is dangerous.
- Refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible and when reheating make sure they are steaming hot before serving.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold and don't leave them at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

If in doubt, throw it out!

