SAFE FOOD HANDLING R-X-10

POLICY:

OPTIONS northwest's goal is to prevent food borne illness to people supported and staff.

A person handling and working with food is responsible for the health of those who are going to eat this food. Following the rules of food sanitation during the handling, preparation, and storage of food and good personal hygiene are essential for the prevention of food-borne illness.

Annually, all staff will be required to review this policy and the "Safe Food Handling Manual".

PURPOSE:

1. To provide guidelines and information to people supported and staff related to handling, preparation and storage of food and good personal hygiene.

2. To prevent food borne illnesses.

PROCEDURE:

1. All meat, fish, poultry and eggs must be heated to a temperature that is safe to eat as indicated in the "COOK IT UNTIL IT'S DONE!" chart (see Appendix A) which will be posted in the kitchen at all locations. Check the temperature using a probe thermometer and make sure the temperature stays the same for at least 15 seconds.

2. All staff will review the Safe Food Handling Manual (see Appendix B) during their General Orientation prior to handling, preparing and storing food and annually thereafter.

3. People supported who access, handle, prepare and store food will be educated about safe food handling, infection control and proper hand washing techniques as required and in a language and manner they can understand.

4. The Supervisor will ensure one staff at each residential location is certified in the "Safe Food Handling Level 1 Certification Course" presented by the Thunder Bay

District Health Unit. These staff will be recertified every five years, per Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

5. If food-borne illness is suspected, notify your supervisor immediately. If available, preserve a portion of the suspect food, wrap it securely, date it, mark "danger" and freeze it. Save the packaging materials if available, and, if not, record identifying marks on the package i.e. purchased from Metro. If you have other identical unopened products, save them and mark "danger" to prevent consumption.

RECOMMENDED BY: Director, Personal Support Services **APPENDICES:** 2

OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Administration, Personal Support Services Administration, Personal Support Services, Human Resources

ORIGINAL POLICY DATE: April 2015

AUTHORIZED BY: Director, Personal Support Services

SIGNATURE: Cheryl Dixon

COOK IT UNTIL IT'S DONE!

CHECK THE TEMPERATURE USING A PROBE THERMOMETER AND MAKE SURE THE TEMPERATURE STAYS THE SAME FOR AT LEAST 15 SECONDS. USE THIS CHART TO DETERMINE THE PROPER TEMPERATURE FOR COMMON FOODS.

WHEN REHEATING FOOD, THE INTERNAL TEMPERATURE MUST REACH THE MINIMUM TEMPERATURE LISTED HERE WITHIN TWO HOURS.

FOOD	SAFE TO EAT AT A MINIMUM	REHEAT TO A MINIMUM
POULTRY - Whole Pieces - Individual Pieces	82°C or 180°F 74°C or 164°F	74°C or 164°F
MIXTURES containing poultry, egg, meat, fish or other hazardous foods	74°C or 164°F	74°C or 164°F
BEEF & VEAL Hamburger, deboned, rolled roasts	71°C or 160°F	71°C or 160°F
PORK All products	71°C or 160°F	71°C or 160°F
LAMB Ground, deboned and rolled	71°C or 160°F	71°C or 160°F
FISH All products	70°C or 158°F	70°C or 158°F
EGGS	63°C or 145°F	63°C or 145°F

Safe Food Handling Manual

A person working with food is responsible for the health of those who are going to eat this food. Following the rules of food sanitation during the preparation and storage of food and good personal hygiene are essential for the prevention of food-borne illness.

The following information will provide you with the knowledge required to safely handle food and prevent food-borne illness.

How Food Poisoning Is Caused:

Most adults have a healthy immune system that helps fight infection. The immune system of very young children, pregnant women, the elderly and chronically ill people are most at risk to develop food borne illnesses. The degree of the illness depends on how much of the affected food was eaten and how badly the food was contaminated.

Food poisoning usually results from eating food containing large numbers of harmful bacteria that infect the lining of the digestive tract or release toxins (poisonous substances) into it or from eating food in which bacteria have previously produced toxins.

The symptoms often occur from 2-36 hours after consuming the contaminated food or drink and may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever stomach cramps lasting anywhere from hours to weeks after the food has been eaten. Each organism that causes food borne illness has its own symptoms and incubation period that may shorten or extend beyond this range.

If food-borne illness is suspected, notify your supervisor immediately. Preserve a portion of the suspect food if available. Wrap it securely, mark "danger" and freeze it. Also, save the packaging materials if available. If the packaging is not available record identifying marks on the package i.e. purchased from Metro. If you have other identical unopened products save them and mark "danger" to prevent consumption.

Microorganisms:

Microorganisms are small life forms that live on and in our bodies and in the natural world around us. You may not see, taste, or smell them but they are on our hands, in our nose and throat, in the air, on kitchen counters, utensils and in food.

Helpful microorganisms are used to make food we eat such as cheese, sauerkraut, yogurt, bread and beer. Our hands have two types of microorganisms on them: resident bacteria and transient bacteria. Resident bacteria or the bacteria that we add to the normal floral of bacteria on our body and hands are not harmful to our health. Transient bacteria or the bacteria that we add to the normal floral on our hands, through touching contaminated surfaces may be harmful to us.

Some microorganisms cause food to spoil. A change in colour, texture or odors can be an indication of spoiled food. The blue/green mold on bread or cheese or the slimy, shiny appearance on cold cuts, are examples of spoiled food.

Pathogens:

Pathogens are microorganisms that are harmful to humans. They include certain bacteria, viruses, parasites, fungi , molds, and yeast.

Bacteria:

Bacteria popularly known as germs or microbes are tiny organisms that can only be seen with the aid of a good microscope and are found throughout nature. While most are not harmful, few can be dangerous. The ones that live and grow in food can cause illness. Under ideal conditions bacteria will divide every ten to twenty minutes and this makes it the most common cause of food borne illnesses. Conditions for ideal growth include: food (high protein), acidity levels, time, temperature, oxygen, and moisture.

Bacteria that cause food borne illness are colorless, odorless, and they do not change the texture of food. By simply looking at the food or tasting it, you cannot tell if harmful bacteria are present.

Viruses:

Viruses are smaller than bacteria. They cannot grow or reproduce in food but can be carried in food. Once inside the body they affect the body cells. A strain of hepatitis virus can cause a food borne illness.

Parasites:

Parasites include such animals as roundworms, tapeworm, and trichinella. They live in the flesh of host animals and are usually transferred to humans in meat or fish.

Fungi:

Fungi include molds and yeasts.

Molds:

Many molds are not harmful but some produce toxins (poisons) that can spread through a food and may be harmful to humans. Even some safe foods can produce mold growth organisms. Molds can grow on almost any food, and at almost any storage condition: moist or dry, high or low pH, salty or sweet. Freezing prevents the growth of mold but will not kill mold already present. Often the food will have a fuzzy or discoloured surface and may start to smell bad. Some molds produce poisons called mycotoxins that cause illness, infections and allergic reactions.

Mold Safety Tips:

1. If mold is found in liquids or semi-solid foods such as jam or maple syrup, these foods should be discarded. Scraping away the mold may not remove all of the toxins present.

2. Do not use cheese covered in cottony white or green spots unless it is characteristic of the cheese (i.e. Camembert).

3. If hard cheese has a patch of mold confined to one area, the cheese may be salvaged by cutting away the mold to a depth of 2.5cm/1inch.

4. When in doubt about a moldy food, throw it out!

Yeasts:

Many types of yeast are beneficial and are used in making bread, beer and other products. Some, however, spoil foods and should be controlled. Yeasts can grow at refrigerator temperatures as well as room temperatures. Yeast requires sugar and moisture to survive and spoils products by slowly eating the food. They most often grow on fruit, bread, syrup, processed meats, pickles, yogurt, and cottage cheese. Contamination can appear as bubbles, and alcohol smell or taste, pink discoloration, or slime.

Yeast Safety tip:

Foods, beverages, or brines showing signs of yeast formation, slimy, or powdery film, cloudy sediment in liquid or gas bubbles, should not be eaten.

Sources of Pathogens:

Pathogens may enter food in a variety of ways. They are found in the air, water and soil and cannot move readily except in watery fluids and they depend on such things as rodents, insects, dust particles, droplets of moisture from coughs or sneezes, hands and pieces of clothing to carry them from one place to another.

Rats, mice, flies and cockroaches are particularly dangerous because they live in garbage and other decaying matter and are attracted to food in a home.

Many foods contain pathogens when you receive them. Root and leafy vegetables may carry bacteria from the soil. Meats may be contaminated with bacteria and contain parasites. Poultry is a common source of salmonella bacteria.

Humans are the most common source of food contamination. Most people carry pathogens in their mouths and noses, on the hands, on their skin, in infected cuts, boils or pimples, on clothing, jewelry, in their hair and under their fingernails. The bacteria are then transferred to the food or onto the utensils upon contact. Infectious hepatitis may be unknowingly transferred to food by humans.

Control of Pathogens:

All foods should be protected against the entry of pathogens, but it must be assumed that some contamination will occur. Controlling the conditions which support bacteria will help control them.

Conditions That Support Bacteria:

1. **Moisture** – Bacteria thrives in moist, warm conditions. They need moisture to multiply and the moister the food, the quicker bacteria grow. The drier the food the less chance bacteria can survive. Dry foods such as beans and rice become potentially hazardous when water is added during cooking. The water activity level of food can be reduced by freezing, dehydrating, adding sugar or salt, or through dry cooking.

2. **Protein** – High protein foods such as raw meats and eggs are likely to be naturally contaminated with pathogenic bacteria. Foods such as milk and cheese may become contaminated during food handling. The following examples of potentially hazardous foods high in protein are unsafe if not handled properly and refrigerated or frozen promptly:
    a. Meat, poultry, fish
    b. Cooked vegetables
    c. Cooked cereals, grains
    d. Custards, puddings and whipped cream
    e. Milk and milk products
    f. Shellfish
    g. Eggs and egg products
    h. Processed meats (i.e. bologna, wieners, ham, etc.)
    i. Dressings, sandwich spreads and soft cheese
    j. Gravies
    k. All canned food after opening

    The following is a list of usually safe foods which may be safely kept at room temperature because food poisoning bacteria do not grow on them.
    a. All foods in cans and pouches until opened
    b. Nuts and peanut butter
    c. Bread, crackers, cookies, and cake
    d. Jam, honey, syrup and candy
    e. Butter, cereal and powdered milk
    f. Raw, cooked, or dry fruit
    g. Pickles, relishes, mustard, and ketchup
    h. Hard salami and other dried sausages, spices

    The shelf lives of these foods are limited and some may go moldy. These foods rarely cause food poisoning but mixing usually safe food with a potentially unsafe food, however, will produce a potentially unsafe mixture (i.e. jam added to pudding).

3. **Neutral pH** –The measurement of acidity or alkalinity of a food is known as pH. Bacteria favour an environment that is neutral or slightly acidic. The Ph is measured on a scale from 0 (acid) to 14 (alkaline). A measurement of 7.0 is considered neutral. Bacteria do not fare well in acidic or alkaline conditions and grow best in a neutral environment with a pH level from 4.6-7.0. Most bacteria growth stops in a very acidic or alkaline (below 4.6) environments:

Acidic	Neutral	Alkaline
0-4	7	9
Vinegar, grapefruit	milk, eggs	soda crackers

4. **Oxygen** - Bacteria vary in the need for oxygen to multiply or survive. Oxygen is required by some bacteria, molds protozoa and aerobes but oxygen is not required by clostridia, botulinum and anaerobes. Some bacteria and most yeast can grow with or without oxygen (i.e. staph aureus).Oxygen is removed during the canning process and this preserves the food. This is why canned food is shelf stable and does not require refrigeration. Some bacteria only multiply in anaerobic conditions, or without air. Botulism is caused by an organism that grows in this condition and is a potentially fatal type of food borne illness.

5. **Temperature** – Bacteria are killed if exposed to thorough cooking temperatures for several minutes and they become dormant and are prevented from multiplying when exposed to cold temperatures. Temperatures between 4°C and 60°C are considered to be within the DANGER ZONE where microorganisms multiply very fast and can reach levels that cause food borne illness. Cold foods should be kept refrigerator cold (at 4°C/40°F or below) and hot foods piping hot (60°C or above). The required cooking temperature for poultry/chicken is 74 °C, for pork 66 °C, and ground beef 68 °C. See appendix A for additional examples.

   Safety Tips regarding Temperature:

   a. Frozen meat is thawed in the refrigerator at 4 °C in one container per item. An alternate quick thawing method can be used for small volume items by placing food in a clean plastic bag suspended in running cool (21 °C or less) tap water until thawed. Thawed food is used immediately or placed in a refrigerator at 5 °C or below.
   b. Proper refrigeration is required to control bacterial growth and prevent food poisoning. Refrigerators are to be maintained at 4 °C or below. Thermometers are to be kept in the warmest part of the refrigerator and frequently checked. To ensure proper air circulation, do not over-stock the refrigerator and never line the shelves.
   c. Refrigerators are to be cleaned thoroughly and regularly with a detergent.
   d. Hot food placed in the fridge can temporarily raise the temperature of the surrounding food. Hot food should be placed in a shallow metal tray for rapid cooling and covered to protect it from drippings from other foods. Leftover are to be labeled and dated.
   e. Practice the "FIFO" rule (first in first out). Food is not used after "Best Before Dates".

f. Refrigeration and freezing will not destroy pathogens but will slow their growth.
g. Freezers should be maintained at temperatures below -18°C.
h. Internal temperature of cooked foods should be checked with a metal food thermometer
i. Use a meat thermometer to measure the internal temperature of cooked meats, poultry, egg and frozen dishes. Put the tip of the thermometer into the thickest part of the meat, without touching fat or bone. For poultry, check the internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breasts. Proper cooking will destroy most pathogens. It is important and necessary to fully cook ground beef and chicken or pork products to kill the naturally present bacteria.
j. Frequent stirring of stews, soups etc. will ensure all parts of the food are kept hot. Use a thermometer to check the temperature.
k. Cook eggs until the yolk are white and firm, not runny. Don't use recipes in which eggs remain raw or only partially cooked.
l. Bring sauces, soups and gravy to a boil when reheating.
m. When cooking in a microwave oven, cover food with a lid or plastic wrap that is approved for microwaving. The steam can aid thorough cooking. Leave a small section uncovered so steam can escape unless package instructions indicate otherwise, and do not let the wrap touch the food. Stir and rotate food for even cooking. Observe the required standing time called for in recipes or package instructions. Food finishes cooking during the standing time. Use a meat thermometer to check that the food is done by inserting in several spots.

Power Outage and Refrigeration

a. Food will usually stay frozen for two days in a non-functioning freezer if it is filled to capacity and for 24 hours if it is less than half full. Food lasts longer by keeping the door shut as much as possible. If power will be off longer than 2 days, food should be moved to an alternative freezer, if available. If food has thawed, it can be refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or feels "refrigerator-cold". Discard any thawed food that has risen to room temperature and remained there for 2 hours or more.
b. Without power the refrigerator section will keep food cool for 4-6 hours, depending on the kitchen temperature. Ice can keep food on the refrigerator shelves cooler. Throw out the following foods if the electrical power to your refrigerator has been off for more than 4 hours. These are called perishable foods. Always consult with you Supervisor prior to discarding food.

Raw or cooked meat, poultry and seafood
Milk, cream, yogurt, soft and semi-soft cheese
Cooked pasta, rice and potatoes
Custard, pudding, chiffon, refrigerated cookie dough, cream filled pastries
Casseroles, soups, stews
Salads (vegetable, pasta, potato etc.)
Fresh eggs, egg substitutes

c. The following foods can be stored, using a protective leak-proof and animal-proof container, in a cold cellar, garage, porch, balcony or neighbors refrigerator, if they have power. If you are putting food outdoors the temperature should be 5 °C/40 °F or less. Make sure the container is placed on a shelf or other surface at least 6 inches above the ground. If you choose a storage area outdoors, make sure it is in the shade protected from the sun and animals.

Margarine and butter
Peanut butter, jams and jellies
Breads, pasta and flour
Ketchup, barbecue sauce, or mustard
Unprepared powdered milk, dry and canned food
Hard or processed cheeses

6. **Time** – While the body will tolerate small numbers of some pathogens, the growth of pathogens to a large concentration will present serious health problems. Since the growth of bacteria is directly related to the amount of time spent in the danger zone, it is critical to control time.

Safety Tips:

a. Unsafe foods should never be kept within the DANGER ZONE temperature (4°C and 60°C) for longer than four hours
b. No moist and perishable food should be kept in the refrigerator for more than seven days
c. Leftover foods such as stews, meats, fish dishes are to be removed after two days
d. Frozen foods should not be thawed at room temperature. Correct thawing procedures are: (a) in the fridge requires 10 hours per kilogram, (b) under cool running water requires 2 hours per kilogram, (c) in the microwave, check manufacturer's instructions
e. Food should be cooked immediately after thawing and once thawed a food should not be refrozen unless it is cooked
f. There are occasions when potentially unsafe foods must be left at in between temperatures for some time such as sandwiches made for lunches. In such

cases, make the sandwiches the evening before, wrap them securely and refrigerate promptly. The following morning, wrap them in newspaper or put them in an insulated bag or small leak-proof container filled with ice or frozen fruit juice to help keep the foods cold while in a lunch box.

Up to this point, we have discussed different pathogens and how to control the conditions which support their growth. Next we will focus on the types of food contamination and what we as food handlers can do to minimize the spread of pathogens.

Types of Food Contamination

1. **Cross contamination** (indirect spread) is the transfer of harmful microorganisms from food to food through a non-food object such as equipment, utensils, human hands, probe thermometers, insects and wiping clothes. It is most commonly associated with the transfer to pathogens from raw food such as fresh poultry to cooked or ready to eat foods like lettuce. It may be transferred by a food handler who cuts raw meat and then handles ready to eat foods without properly washing hands in between or from using the same cutting board or equipment to prepare both raw and cooked foods.
2. **Direct contamination** of food is the introduction of harmful microorganisms, chemicals or toxins into food which can easily occur. An example is when drippings from raw, potentially dangerous foods, fall onto ready-to-eat food stored below them in a refrigerator.

Regardless of the difference between direct and cross contamination, the outcome is the same – the food that was once safe to eat is now contaminated.

Controlling Food Contamination:

1. **Sanitizers and disinfectants** are useful in controlling the growth of bacteria. They do not destroy all bacteria but reduce the number of pathogens and should be used in accordance with Environmental Cleaning Policy R-X-5.
2. **Raw meat** should be stored on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so drippings cannot contaminate other foods.
3. **Dish and utensil washing** is another important area of sanitary control. Washing dishes in a dishwasher and manual dish washing will be done in accordance with Environmental Cleaning Policy R-X-5.
4. **Cleaning-** Make sure kitchen utensils, containers and work surfaces are thoroughly cleansed, especially those that have been in contact with raw meat and poultry.
5. **Food contact surfaces** should be crack-free, non-absorbent, non-toxic, crevice free and cleanable.

6. **Garbage containers** should be emptied when full. Containers should be made from durable, leak proof and non-absorbent material with tight fitting lids. The inside/outside of the container should be maintained in a sanitary manner to eliminate the attraction of insects and rodents.
7. **When BBQ-ing**, do not use the same plate to put the cooked meat on that was used to bring the uncooked meat to the BBQ unless it was properly sanitized first. Marinate foods in the refrigerator and never use the marinade on cooked foods. Use separate brushes when marinating raw and cooked foods and separate utensils. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperatures of meat at different points to ensure even cooking. Poultry - 74 °C (165 °F), ground meat other than poultry 68 °C (155 °C) and pork 66 °F.
8. **Picnics-** Picnic foods can be hazardous because foods such as salads, sandwich fillings, hamburger patties and cut watermelon receive a lot of food handling during preparation which increases the risk of contamination; large quantities of food are not cooled rapidly after cooking; and food sits out for long periods of time at warm temperatures that support the growth of harmful bacteria. Safe foods for picnics include nuts, peanut butter, dry cereals, bread, crackers, cookies, muffins, bagels, fresh fruits and vegetables, pickles, relish, ketchup, and dried meats such as pepperoni and salami. At risk foods, because they require temperature control, include meats, fish poultry and eggs; salads containing mayonnaise, meats, fish, poultry or eggs; milk and milk products; sandwich meats; soups; chili's and stews. The following are safe food handling practices for picnics:
    a. Prepare food no more than one day ahead unless it is to be frozen.
    b. Ensure there is a source of clean water at the picnic site, and if none is available, take water for cleaning hands, utensils and meat thermometer. Moist towelettes can be used for cleaning hands. Pack extra plates and utensils to prevent cross contamination. Include paper towels, clean plastic bags to store food, and garbage bags for dirty paper towels and food scraps.
    c. Place cold foods in water proof containers or wrap in plastic wrap or aluminum foil and completely immerse in ice. Place frozen gel packs between packages of food. Never set containers of food on top of ice. Pack food in insulated coolers.
    d. Wrap hot food well in towels and then newspaper, and place in an insulated container.
    e. Put a blanket over the cooler and place in the shade upon arrival at the picnic site. Keep the cooler closed.
    f. Keep food covered to prevent contamination by insects.
    g. Put cold leftovers in the cooler after serving. Dispose of leftovers if food has sat out for longer than an hour or if ice or gel pack is melted.

9. **Pest Control-** Keep the food preparation area free of flies and other insects which might spread bacteria.
10. **Tasting food**- directly from cooking utensils is unsanitary because the taster will contaminate the utensils with germs from the mouth. A clean utensil should be used each time food is tasted to prevent the spread of pathogens.
11. **Personal hygiene** – the personal habits of anyone who handles food are critical to the safety of the food. Since pathogens are commonly present on the skin, beards, hair, clothing and many objects touched by food handlers, precautions must be taken. Bacteria hide in the pores, folds and crevices of the skin and under fingernails and are difficult to remove through normal hand washing. Fingernails should be short and clean. Do not wear fingernail polish or artificial nails. Aprons should never be used to dry hands or wipe your face. Never open bags by blowing into them. Never taste food with your fingers. Coughs and sneezes should always be guarded.
12. **Hair Care-**When handling or preparing food, hair should be tied up or back with an elastic. This is to prevent hair from falling into the food, which can lead to food borne illness.
13. **Jewelry** wearing should be minimal as per Employee Dress Code HR-III-45. Most pieces of jewelry collect soil, are difficult to keep clean, hide bacteria and keep fingers moist underneath rings.
14. **Illness and infection** – anyone who is infected carries pathogens which can be transferred to the food. Boils, infected cuts pimples are sources of pathogens. Some illnesses such as salmonellosis and hepatitis can leave pathogens in the body long after the symptoms of the disease have disappeared. You should not handle food during or immediately after gastrointestinal illnesses until your doctor confirms you are no longer a carrier of any pathogens. Avoid handling food when ill, if possible. Keep all cuts on hands clean and covered; cover your mouth during a cough or sneeze, then rewash hands afterwards.
15. **Food Processors** – Food processors will only be washed in the dishwasher in order to ensure sanitization. Please note – Dishes must always be cleaned in the dishwasher using the sanitizing cycle. Food processors are to be placed on the top rack of the dishwasher in order to extend the life of the container. If processors are used in the morning and there isn't the time required to put them through the dishwasher prior to the next meal a second processor should be available in the home.
16. **Hand Washing Sinks** – Each home is to have one sink in the kitchen designated for hand washing during food preparation where antibacterial soap is provided and the Health Unit's hand washing sign is posted. Kitchen sinks are not to be used for hand washing after providing care to people supported.
17. **Using the Sink for Food Preparation** – Prior to doing any food preparation in the kitchen sink i.e. cleaning vegetables, rinsing noodles etc. the following procedures are to be followed:

a. Wash the sink with soap and water ensuring all particles have been removed and rinse.
b. Spray the sink with the approved sanitizer in accordance with Environmental Cleaning Policy R-X-5.
c. Rinse well before use.

18. **Food Brought in by Staff**-any foods cooked or prepared by staff and brought in to the workplace should not be shared with people supported as it did not come from an inspected facility. Food that was prepared at an inspected facility i.e. restaurant and that was not properly stored should also not be given to people supported.

19. **People Supported Who Independently Access their Fridge** – People who are able to independently access their fridge must be educated about proper hand washing including when to wash their hands and why it is necessary. The information must be provided in a language and a manner appropriate to each individual.

20. **Hand washing** –Hands shall be washed/sanitized in accordance with Routine Practices For Residential Settings Policy R-4.

Food Storage

Very few foods keep indefinitely. The principle of FIFO (First In, First Out) should be followed for storage of all foods

Produce:

Most fruits and vegetables should be refrigerated. Some such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash, turnip, eggplants and citrus fruits may be kept for a limited time at a temperature of 16°C. All produce requires good air circulation. Following are safety tips to prevent food-borne illness from produce:

a. Purchase fresh fruits and vegetables that are not bruised or damaged, and fresh cut items such as packaged salads and precut melons refrigerated at the store.
b. Juices found in the refrigerated sections of stores or in non-refrigerated shelf-stable containers such as juice boxes, bottles or cans are usually pasteurized or treated. Items purchased at health food stores, or farm markets may not be pasteurized or treated. If in doubt, do not purchase un-pasteurized or untreated juices.
c. Fresh fruits and vegetables should be stored unwashed to prevent spoilage and mold growth during storage. If the produce is very dirty, rinse and dry well before storing and wash properly before food is eaten or prepared. Remove of throw away bruised or damaged portions when preparing to cook them or before eating raw. Rub firm-skin products such as cantaloupes and melons, under running water with a clean vegetable brush and rinse.

d. Pre-cut fruits and vegetable are refrigerated immediately and stored in the refrigerator crisper in sealed packages, plastic bags or clean airtight containers. Whole fruits and vegetable recommended for refrigeration should be stored separate from raw meat, poultry or seafood.
e. Room temperature storage conditions for fruits and vegetables should be dry, cook and dark. The ideal temperature is 10 °C to 21 °C. Higher temperatures speed deterioration.

Dry Storage:

Dry goods should be stored in a dry, well-ventilated area and on shelves at least 6 inches off the floor. Bulk foods such as flour and grains should be stored in closed, sealed containers.

Canned Food:

Dented, damaged or expanded tins are to be discarded Read labels carefully as some canned foods require refrigeration. Practice the "FIFO" rule (first in first out). Older stock is stored towards the front so it is used first. Foods beyond their expiry dates are not to be used. Once a canned good has been open, any contents remaining must be transferred into a container, labelled, dated and put in the refrigerator.

Poisonous Substances:

Poisonous substances such as cleaning agents, detergents, and insecticides are packaged much like food and should be stored in a separate cupboard or cabinet, kept in their own clearly marked containers to avoid any confusion with edible products.

Food Sensitivities:

All foods that a person may have sensitivity to must be avoided.

Safe Handling of Eggs

Salmonella bacteria can occasionally be transmitted from infected hens directly into the eggs. Eggs contaminated with salmonella bacteria can cause a form of food poisoning. Therefore, it is important to practice the following handling procedures that minimize the risk of salmonellosis.

1. Avoid serving raw eggs and food containing raw eggs
2. Cook eggs thoroughly until both the yolk and white are firm
3. Cook scrambled eggs until there is no visible liquid egg. Hold for serving at 60°C +
4. Wash hands with hot, soapy water and wash and sanitize utensils, equipment and work areas immediately after food preparation
5. Serve cooked eggs and egg-rich foods hot immediately after cooking or refrigerate
6. Do not keep eggs out of the refrigerator for more than two hours

7. Purchase only Canadian Grade A eggs with clean, un-cracked shells that have been stored under refrigeration. Buy only the amount needed for one or two weeks at a time – do not use cracked eggs.
8. Do not use eggs after the Best Before or expiry date on the carton – keep eggs in original container

Safe Handling of Turkey

1. Thaw in the refrigerator (watch out for drippings) in cold water in a water tight bag or container or in the microwave (follow manufacturer's instructions). It may also be thawed overnight on the kitchen counter if the turkey (in a plastic bag) is put into a paper bag to prevent the outside of the carcass from warming to room temperature while the inside is still thawing.
2. Wash inside and outside of carcass and giblets in cold running water and drain well
3. Turkey should be thoroughly cooked at a temperature between 150-160°C. Any lower than this and the naturally present food poisoning bacteria may not be killed. The final temperature on a meat thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh muscle should be at 74°C.
4. For maximum safety, turkey or other poultry should not be stuffed as warm stuffing makes an ideal placed for bacterial growth. It is especially unsafe to stuff a turkey the night before cooking even if it is refrigerated. Since stuffing is placed in the center of the turkey, it may not be thoroughly cooked when the turkey is and bacteria may survive. If you must stuff a turkey, do so immediately before cooking. Stuffing must reach a temperature of at least 70°C on the thermometer for heat to destroy the bacteria.
5. Remove stuffing immediately after cooking
6. Treat all poultry as contaminated. Drippings produced during thawing should be considered contaminated and affected surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected.

Suspect Food:

Remember this easy rule if you have any suspicions about the safety of food:

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!