

## Whiteside County Health Department

This is the first in a series of quarterly educational newsletters developed for food service owners and operators by Whiteside County Health Department.

Please direct your questions about the topics in this brochure and others to the WCHD Environmental Department. Call (815) 772-7411, Ext. 104, or e-mail [wchealth@essex1.com](mailto:wchealth@essex1.com).



# WHITESIDE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Whiteside  
County Health  
Department —  
Environmental



*Information for  
Food Service  
owners and  
operators*

*Safety is the  
Number 1  
priority*

**(815) 772-7411  
Ext. 104**

## *Clean hands are a must for all food handlers*

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### **Train every employee about proper hand washing**

- Hand washing is the number one thing you can do to prevent food-borne illness.
- Hands should be washed for 20 seconds, with soap and warm water.
- If hands free sink is not available, use a paper towel to turn water off.
- Document the process and make sure employees know why good hand washing is imperative.
- Monitor your employees' hand washing and use positive reinforcement to encourage this important practice.



### **Be a safe food handler by requiring strict personal hygiene**

All employees should wear clean uniforms and hair restraints. Jewelry and artificial nails must not be permitted.

Restrict or send home crew members that are ill - they must not handle foods.

## *Food must be stored, chilled, heated to strict guidelines*

### **Keep foods out of the Danger Zone (41° to 140° F)**

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold! Teach all crew members to use temperature charts and a stem thermometer.

Check food temperature in two places—the thickest portion and the center. Sanitize the thermometer stem before and after use with an alcohol swab.

**Cook and heat process food to above recommended minimum temperature** (usually 145°F, 155°F or 165°F depending on the food). Memorize your minimum cooking temperatures. Post a chart for the crew.

**Rapidly chill hot food to below 41°F within 4-6 hours.** Techniques to reduce cooling time include using an ice bath or shallow pans, cutting or reducing food, stirring food and keeping food uncovered. Be sure to check local regulations.

**Reheat food to 165° F or higher** within 2 hours and hold at this temperature for 15 seconds. Hold hot foods at 140°F.

### **Food must be kept as cold as possible during storage and preparation.**

- An internal food temperature ranging from 35 to 38°F is optimal—never higher than 41° F.
- Keep frozen food at a temperature of 0°F. Safely thaw foods a day in advance under refrigeration.

## *Cross-contamination may lead to foodborne illnesses*

**Avoid cross-contamination** of raw and ready-to-eat foods by hands, utensils and equipment. Wash, rinse and sanitize all food contact equipment. Keep raw products separate from ready-to-eat foods.

To prevent cross-contamination observe time and temperature guidelines when storing and handling prepared food. Label prepared foods with product, preparation date and time and optimal temperature.

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