

COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION

FOOD SAFETY GUIDANCE

The purpose of these guidelines is to assure that the basic principles of food sanitation are met to prevent/eliminate unsafe contaminated food and foodborne illness from a Cottage Food Operation. Following these guidelines will reduce the chances of a foodborne illness from food prepared in a Cottage Food Operation as well as assure compliance with state law. A foodborne illness is any infection or illness that is transferred to people by the food they eat.

The following food safety risk factors are often identified with foodborne illnesses.



1) Contaminated Food Equipment

Contamination of food occurs from food equipment that has not been properly cleaned and sanitized. For example, if a cutting board is used to slice raw chicken for the evening meal and is set aside without being cleaned and sanitized, the number of bacteria on the surface of the board will quickly and significantly increase. If the same cutting board is used later to cut a cottage food product, the cottage food becomes contaminated and illness may occur.

ALWAYS WASH, RINSE, AND SANITIZE YOUR FOOD UTENSILS AND FOOD CONTACT SURFACES BEFORE AND AFTER FOOD PREPARATION.

In a typical commercial setting, the wash, rinse, sanitizer procedure is implemented by use of a sink that has three compartments; however, in a home kitchen setting there are alternative methods recommended to implement the sanitizing step, including:

Manual Utensil Wash/Sanitize Procedure:

- Step 1: Rinse or scrape all food utensils before washing.
- Step 2: Wash utensils in the first sink.
- Step 3: Rinse utensils by immersing or spray-rinsing in the second sink to remove all traces of food and detergent. Change the rinse water at frequent intervals.
- Step 4: After rinsing, immerse utensils in a large container of chlorine bleach sanitizing solution (approximately 2 capfuls chlorine/gallon of water) for at least 30 seconds. Check the concentration of the sanitizing solution at regular intervals with chlorine test strips to ensure 100 parts per million (ppm).
- Step 5: Air dry all utensils on a clean, dry, sanitary surface. Do not towel dry utensils.

Automatic Dishmachine Utensil Wash/Sanitize Procedure:

Step 1: Upon removing utensils from automatic dishmachine, immerse utensils in a container of chlorine bleach sanitizing solution for at least 30 seconds.

Sanitizing Food Contact Surfaces:

- Step 1: Use a moist cloth, do not use sponges, to remove gross food product from counter tops and food preparation surfaces.
- Step 2: Use a moist cloth stored in a container of sanitizing solution of chlorine bleach to wipe and sanitize the kitchen surfaces used to prepare food.



2) Poor Personal Hygiene

When a person who is handling food does not practice good personal hygiene, food is likely to become contaminated. Food handlers may contaminate food by:

- ✓ Not wearing clean clothes
- ✓ Not restraining their hair
- ✓ Not practicing effective hand washing procedure
- ✓ Working when they are ill.

Handwashing is the Best Defense Against Foodborne Illnesses

Most food borne illnesses are caused from fecal particles passed from the hands onto the food. Frequent washing of the hands during the food preparation is a key prevention strategy which minimizes the spread of food borne illness from contaminated surfaces that hands may have contacted.

The following is a guideline for effective hand washing procedure:

- Step 1: Wet hands with warm running water.
- Step 2: Apply soap.
- Step 3: Rub hands together for 20 seconds, making sure to get soap to all exposed surfaces including in between fingers, under fingernails, and up the forearms.
- Step 4: Rinse off soap.
- Step 5: Dry hands with single-use paper towel (cloth hand-drying towels may harbor bacteria). Please visit the following website for further education on hand washing: <http://www.foodsafetymonth.com/Activities>

Note Hand sanitizers are not an effective way to rid the hands of bacteria. Sanitizers do not actually remove soil from the hands.*

Wearing gloves is never a substitute for hand washing.



The following safe food preparation practices will reduce the chance of foodborne illnesses.

1) Maintaining the CFO Separate from Domestic Home Activities

Maintaining a clear and distinct food preparation operation for cottage food production is an important control issue in the Cottage Food Law. The statute lists the following activities that are to be **kept separate** when preparing, packaging, and handling of a cottage food product:

- ✓ Family meal preparation;
- ✓ Dishwashing;
- ✓ Clothes washing or ironing;
- ✓ Kitchen cleaning;
- ✓ Guest entertainment;
- ✓ No infants, small children, or pets may be in the home kitchen during the preparation, packaging or handling of the cottage food product. This does not mean that they are excluded from the home kitchen during other uses;
- ✓ Smoking is prohibited in the portion of a private home used for the preparation, packaging, storage, or handling of cottage food products and related ingredients or equipment, or both, while cottage food products are being prepared, packaged, stored, or handled.



These types of domestic activities can cause a contamination to your cottage food product(s). For example, preparing raw chicken for the evening meal and cottage food handling at the same time would increase the likelihood of a cross contamination. For health reasons, it is important to keep domestic operations and your CFO separate.

2) Kitchen Equipment, Utensils, Food Preparation Surfaces Maintained Clean and Sanitary

As part of your cottage food production, you must first clean the utensils to be used and all food contact surfaces. The required method to be used for every food utensil, including food preparation surfaces, is that hot water with a detergent be used, rinsed with warm clear water and sanitized with a bleach water solution. The bleach solution concentration should be at least 100 parts per million (or about 2 capfuls per gallon of water). After utensils and work surfaces are cleaned and sanitized, they should be left to air dry so as not to introduce bacteria by using a cloth towel. All work surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized every four hours.



3) Eliminating Insects/Rodents/Dust

Sanitation extends to periods of time beyond actual food preparation. The areas in the home designated for preparation, storage of food, utensils, or equipment should be free of rodents, insects, and dust at all times.

4) Potable Water

Water is the primary component and basis for cleanliness and safe consumption of food/beverage products. The water supply in any habitable dwelling, particularly in food processing, must be safe to consume and use for sanitation purposes. Most water is sourced from a public water supply; however, there are some water sources that come from a private well. The water used in your cottage food operation must be potable for use in the following ways:



- ✓ Food preparation;
- ✓ Washing, rinsing, and sanitizing equipment, utensils and food contact surfaces;
- ✓ Hand washing purposes;
- ✓ Water used as an ingredient.

5) Labeling

Labeling is an important part of your food processing business. It is an excellent advertisement tool as well as an educational element for your product. All cottage foods must be properly labeled in compliance with the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. Sec. 343 et seq.). The label must include the following:

- ✓ The words, “**Made in a Home Kitchen**” or “**Repackaged in a Home Kitchen**” (based on your situation) in 12-point type.
- ✓ The name commonly used for the food product.
- ✓ Name of the Cottage Food Operation that produced the food product.
- ✓ The registration or permit number of the “Class A” or “Class B” Cottage Food Operation which produced the cottage food product and, in the case of a “Class B” Cottage Food Operation, the name of the county of the local enforcement agency that issued the permit number.
- ✓ The ingredients of the cottage food product, in descending order of predominance by weight, if the product contains two or more ingredients.



In addition, the Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic Act requires specific allergens be listed. The eight major food allergens are listed as: Milk and milk products, eggs, fish, soy, shellfish, peanuts, tree nuts, and wheat proteins.

For more information on allergen labeling, refer to the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act: Consumer Protection Act 2004 (enacted 2006) for FDA compliance, guidance, and regulatory information.

Ending your Cottage Food Operation

So that accurate records can be maintained, please notify Environmental Health Services at 805-681-4900 if you choose to discontinue your Cottage Food Operation.