

PERRY RICKARD  
Director of Public Health Services

MICHAEL MACLEAN, M.D., M.S.  
Health Officer



**COUNTY OF KINGS**

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

KEITH WINKLER, DEPUTY HEALTH DIRECTOR  
Environmental Health Services

330 Campus Drive - Hanford, California 93230  
Telephone: (559) 584-1411 Fax: (559) 584-6040  
[www.countyofkings.com/health/ehs](http://www.countyofkings.com/health/ehs)

## Questions for the Cook

FOOD HANDLERS' ANSWERS TO WHY THE FOOD THAT THEY HAVE PREPARED AND SERVED IS SAFE

**QUESTION: Why is the food safe to eat?**

ANSWERS:

1. Health:

- I do not have diarrhea.

2. Hands:

- I double washed my fingertips coming from the toilet.
- I washed my hands before touching Ready-to-Eat (RTE) food, if they are contaminated.

3. Food storage:

- I prevent cross-contamination of raw food and juice with RTE food by storing raw food under RTE food.
- I keep chemicals separate from food.

4. Food contact surface:

- I washed the food contact surface (cutting board, knife, bowls, grinders, etc.) before working with RTE food.

5. Pre-preparation:

- When I open food packages, I assure that the packages are not damaged, there are no signs of abuse of the food, the food is at the correct temperature, and the shelf life has not expired.
- I look for hard foreign objects in food and remove them.
- I know what ingredients can cause allergic reactions so that I can answer customer questions.

6. Preparation of food made safe by the supplier:

- If the supplier has made the food safe, I can serve it as is. This includes canned food; pre-washed salad ingredients; fully cooked meat, fish, and poultry. If I heat the food, it is for quality, not safety.

7. Preparation of fruits and vegetables:

- If the fruits and vegetables were raw and to be served raw, I double washed them and cut them on a clean food contact surface with a clean knife.

8. Preparation of cooked meat, fish, poultry, and vegetables:

- If it was raw, I pasteurized it to (160°F, 30 seconds) to kill the vegetative pathogens. The spores survived.
- I use a thermometer to monitor my procedure.

9. Hot hold:

- I held the food at above 130°F / 140°F to prevent spore germination and monitored with a thermometer.

10. Cooling:

- I cooled from 130 to 45°F in 15 hours to prevent more than 1 log increase, which is also 3.3 multiplications, of *Clostridium perfringens* spores.

11. Cold combinations:

- I mixed cold combination recipes at <50°F to prevent development of bacterial toxins.
- If food / sauce / dressing is more acid than pH 4.6 / 4.1, it is safe.

12. Cold hold:

- I held prepared food at 40°F to control *Bacillus cereus* growth. There were no vegetative pathogens, because I pasteurized the food and followed our Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs).

*These questions are used with the permission of their author:*

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O. Peter Snyder, Jr., Ph.D.  
Hospitality Institute of Technology and Management  
670 Transfer Road, Suite 21A; St Paul, Minnesota 55114  
<http://www.hi-tm.com>  
Tel 651-646-7077 FAX 651-646-5984  
One worldwide uniform set of retail food safety guidelines