



FOOD SAFETY : MYTH OR FACT?

Stacie Light
Asst. Food Service Director, Warsaw Community Schools
ISNA President Elect

Working in school foodservice, as professionals, we know that food safety matters! Over time there have been myths that may have crept into your kitchens and it is time that we sleuth them into real facts, or simple myths. Below are statements/questions about current food safety myths and their answers.

1. If the spaghetti that I served yesterday has been in the cooler for 7 days and it looks ok and smells ok, it is safe to eat.

This is a Myth. Using your sense of taste, smell and sight cannot be trusted to find unsafe food. Please stick to the use by date and storage instructions in your school's SOP. You may also find guidance within the Foodsafety.gov FoodKeeper App. <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app>

2. The worst symptom to get from food poisoning is an upset stomach.

This is a Myth. An upset tummy may be the most talked about symptom, however, other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, cramping, headache, joint/muscle pain, double vision, dizziness, memory loss, trouble speaking or swallowing, seizure, coma, and even death.

3. You do not have to wash bagged lettuce, greens or carrots.

This is a Fact, IF your packaged greens or carrots are labeled "ready-to-eat," "washed," or "triple washed." These pre-washed greens have been through a cleaning process immediately before going into the bag. Re-washing and handling the greens or carrots creates opportunities for contamination.

4. Removing mold from bread makes it safe to eat.

This is a Myth. Food with mold should not be eaten – even if the mold has been removed. Mold has branches and roots, therefore mold found on the surface indicates only part of the area. Helpful tip: Don't sniff the moldy item. This can cause respiratory issues.

5. I must wash my hands before preparing food – even if I just used hand sanitizer gel.

This is a Fact. Even if you have just used hand sanitizer gel, you MUST wash your hands with soap and water. Sure, hand sanitizer can effectively kill germs, but sanitizer does little to reduce surface tension between your skin and dirt, grease, and germs.

6. Freezing foods kills harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness.

This is a Myth. Bacteria can survive freezing temperatures and freezing is not a method for

making foods safe to eat. When food is thawed, bacteria can still be present and begin to multiply.

7. Raw meat and poultry should be washed before cooking.

This is a Myth. Washing meat and poultry before cooking is not recommended, since it increases the risk of cross-contamination by spreading bacteria to surfaces such as your sink, counter surfaces, and cooking utensils.

8. You can tell when your chicken or hamburger is done cooking by looking at its color.

This is a Myth. The ONLY way to determine if food is safe to serve is by checking the internal temperature. Minimal internal temperatures are:
145° for roasts, seafood, pork, and shell eggs that will be used immediately
155° for ground meats or shell eggs that will be hot-held for service
165° for all poultry, stuffed meat/seafood/pork/pasta.

9. Plastic chopping boards are more hygienic than all others.

This is a Myth. Whether plastic, wooden, glass or even marble, the important thing is that the cutting board gets cleaned properly after every use, and separate boards are used for raw vs. cooked foods. Cutting/chopping boards should also be replaced if they are damaged with deep cuts or scoring.

10. I cannot use my hands or a glass to scoop ice from the machine.

This is a Fact. Ice is food. Do not use your hands or your glass to get ice. Use an ice scoop to transfer ice and store the ice scoop outside of the ice machine in a clean, protected location.

Sources:

ServeSafe Manager Book 6th Edition
FoodSafety.Gov
USDA – Food Safety and Inspection
Gordon Food Service
Markon - www.markon.com

**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT QUIZ
SPRING ISSUE 2021**

**Eligible for 1 CEU
in Key Area 2,
OPERATIONS**

NAME: _____

MEMBER ID#: _____

EMAIL: _____

1. Freezing foods will kill bacteria that cause foodborne illness

a. True b. False

2. My carrots came in from the distributor as cleaned and washed, therefore I do not need to wash them again.

a. True b. False

3. If you wash raw meat before cooking you increase the chance of bacteria spreading to counter surfaces and utensils.

a. True b. False

4. Cook raw chicken to what temperature:

a. 165° b. 155° c. 135°

5. If you are cooking scrambled eggs that will be eaten immediately, cook to a temperature of:

a. 145° b. 155° c. 135°

6. Mold has branches and roots:

a. True b. False

7. I just sanitized my hands with sanitizer gel, do I really need to wash my hands with soap and water too?

a. YES b. NO

8. We cooked chili 7 days ago and it has been in our cooler. Can we serve it again to our students if it looks fine and smells ok?

a. YES b. NO

9. The gym teacher has been using her cup to scoop up ice and then adds her water, is this ok?

a. YES b. NO

10. I have 3 cutting boards: one for raw meat, one for bread, and one for vegetables. Is it ok to interchange using the three if they have not been cleaned and sanitized?

a. YES b. NO

Submit to Sheri Shipp, Executive Director by email or postal mail.

Email: sheri@indianasna.org **Postal Address:** P.O. Box 915, Brownsburg, IN 46112