



Food Safety

If you provide food as part of your ministry activity you need to think about food safety. Food can be dangerous if it is not handled, prepared and stored correctly. Food borne illnesses are unpleasant at best and food allergies can be fatal. Children are particularly vulnerable.

Food regulations are governed by local government and you will need to consult your local Council for any special requirements. The following are some general guidelines adapted from the New South Wales Food Authority.

BE CAREFUL!

Watch out for raw and cooked meats, dairy products, seafood, unpasteurised juices, ready packed salads and vegetables, cooked rice, pasta and products containing raw eggs. This doesn't mean that you can't use them, just be careful when you are cooking, serving and storing them.

You need to be aware of children and young people who are allergic to certain foods, such as peanuts and peanut products. If you have someone in your group who is allergic, the best thing to do is exclude these foods from your menu. You should also ensure that the children do not share food or utensils, and that the use of food in play or craft activities is restricted.

KEEP IT CLEAN

Bacteria can live on your bench tops and chopping boards. Keep it under control by following these steps:

- Wipe all scraps off
- Wash with hot soapy water
- Where possible soak for at least a minute in very hot water or for bench tops spray them with sanitizing solution following the directions on the label
- Leave to drain, air dry or wipe with paper towels. Using a tea towel can spread germs.
- You also need to make sure your kitchen is generally clean and kept free of vermin.

KEEP HOT THINGS HOT AND COLD THINGS COLD

Bacteria that cause food poisoning grow rapidly between 5°C and 60°C. Keep hot foods hot in the oven / food warmer and cold foods cold in the fridge and do not leave them at room temperature for more than 2 hours. If in doubt, throw it out!



PREPARE CAREFULLY

Anyone involved in preparing food must remember:

- do not prepare foods for others if you are ill,
- cover any lacerations or wounds with a brightly coloured bandage, tape or plaster,
- remove all jewellery,
- do not eat, drink or smoke whilst preparing or serving food,
- wash your hands with warm, soapy water and dry with a paper towel (not a tea towel) before and after working with food,
- tie back or cover long hair with a net or cap,
- wear suitable, clean protective clothing, and
- use clean chopping boards and utensils each time you prepare a new type of food.

WHEN SERVING OR DISPLAYING FOOD

- All food must be wrapped or covered when on display.
- Self-service food must have tongs, spoons, etc. ready for people to serve themselves without touching the food directly.

RUNNING AN EVENT OR SELLING FOOD

If you are planning an event, you should appoint an Event Coordinator to ensure that council requirements are met and volunteers understand their role in food safety. You should also keep a record of who supplied the food.

MORE INFORMATION

You can get more general information from the NSW Food Authority [website](#) and in the national guidelines [here](#). If you want information about food allergies, you can find some helpful facts [here](#).