

Food Safety Words to Know

Allergen: a naturally occurring protein in a food or ingredient that some people are sensitive to

Allergic Reaction: when enough of an allergen is consumed by an allergen sensitive person, the immune system mistakenly considers it harmful and attacks the food protein, causing a reaction

Bacteria: single-celled, living microorganisms that can spoil food and cause foodborne illness

Blast Chill: equipment that blasts cold air across food at high speeds to remove heat, typically used to cool large amounts of food

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): a federal agency that conducts and supports health promotion, prevention and preparedness activities in the United States with the goal of improving overall public health

Contamination: the presence of harmful substances in food. Contaminants fall into the following categories:

Biological: viruses, parasites, fungi and bacteria that threaten the safety of food. Biological contaminants are the greatest threat to food safety

Chemical: cleaners, sanitizers and polishes that enter food and make it unsafe

Physical: foreign object such as metal shavings, staples and bandages that enter food and make it unsafe

Critical Control Point (CCP): a point, step or procedure at which controls can be applied and a food safety hazard can be prevented, eliminated or reduced to acceptable (critical) levels

Date Markings: A labeling standard for food that is stored for longer than a 24 hour period. Date marking must indicate when the food must be sold, eaten or thrown out

FAT TOM: a mnemonic device used in the food service industry to describe the six favorable conditions required for the growth of foodborne pathogens. FAT TOM stands for: Food, acidity, time, temperature, oxygen, moisture

FDA: the U.S. Food and Drug Administration responsible for protecting and promoting public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety, along with other entities of public health

Flow of Food: the path that food travels through a foodservice establishment, typically starting with purchasing/receiving and ending with cleaning/disposal

Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS): the public health agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture responsible for ensuring that the nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry and egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged

HACCP: a tool to assess hazards and establish control systems that focus on prevention rather than relying mainly on end-product testing

HACCP System: a scientific system that identifies specific hazards and measures for their control to ensure the safety of food

Immune System: the body's defense against infectious organisms and other invaders. Through a series of steps called the immune response, the immune system attacks organisms and substances that invade body systems and cause disease

NSF: an independent, internationally recognized, non-profit organization that certifies foodservice equipment and ensures it is designed and constructed in a way that promotes food safety

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): a branch of the U.S. department of Labor responsible for establishing and enforcing safety and health standards in the workplace

TCS Food: food that requires time/temperature control for safety to limit pathogen growth or toxin formation

Temperature Danger Zone: the range in which pathogenic bacteria can multiply rapidly in a food and possibly cause foodborne disease (40°F to 135°F)

Time-Temperature Abuse: any time TCS food is in the temperature danger zone (40°F to 135°F)

Virus: the smallest microbial food contaminant, which can be transferred from person to person, person to food or person to food-contact surface