

Food provided at community events, such as street parties, must comply with food law and be safe to eat.

## Keeping food safe

Following the 4Cs of food hygiene will help prevent the spread of harmful bacteria and viruses, ensuring that the food you make is safe to eat. The 4Cs of food hygiene are:

- Cleaning – Wash hands and surfaces often
- Chilling – Refrigerate properly
- Cooking – Cook foods thoroughly
- Cross-contamination – Keep cooked (Ready to Eat food) and uncooked foods separate.

Here are some general practical tips for when you're making food for large numbers of people:

- **ALWAYS** wash your hands regularly with soap and water and dry them preferably with paper hand towels. Use hand sanitisers only if hand washing facilities are not available
- **DO NOT** handle food if you are ill with vomiting or diarrhoea.
- **ALWAYS** wash fresh fruit and vegetables
- **ALWAYS** separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other food
- **DO NOT** use food past its use-by date
- **ALWAYS** store raw meat, poultry and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices do not drip onto other foods
- **ALWAYS** use one cutting board for raw meat products and another for sandwiches and salads that are ready-to-eat
- **ALWAYS** read any cooking instructions and make sure food is properly cooked before you serve it
- **ALWAYS** ensure that food preparation areas are suitably cleaned and sanitised after use and wash any equipment you are using in hot soapy water
- **ALWAYS** wash cutting boards, knives, other utensils, and hands with hot, soapy water after they come into contact with raw food products.
- **DO NOT** place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat products.
- **DO NOT** wash raw meat or poultry – any harmful bacteria will be killed during cooking. Washing can splash harmful bacteria around the kitchen leading to cross-contamination.

## Chilled food

Anything that will be eaten without further cooking, whether it's chicken sandwiches or trifle, should be stored in a fridge below 8°C. When it is brought out, it should not remain at room temperature for longer than **four hours** – after that, bacteria will start to multiply and could become dangerous, therefore any remaining food should be thrown away. If it's a really hot day remember that food will spoil faster – you could put frozen ice packs on the table underneath dishes to help keep them cool.

## Cooked food

Make sure food is cooked thoroughly and is steaming hot in the middle. To check that meat is cooked, you can use a probe thermometer (achieve 75°C) **OR** insert a knife into the thickest part of the meat, it is fully cooked if the juices are clear and there is no pink or red meat. Once cooked, hot food should be kept at 63°C or above until ready to serve. Once put on the table, hot food should not be left at room temperature for more than **two hours**. If you are going to keep any leftovers, cool it quickly (within 90 minutes) and put into the fridge or freezer. Eat refrigerated leftovers within three days and ensure it is reheated thoroughly to 75°C and served immediately.

## Barbecues.

If you are using a charcoal barbecue, allow time for the coals to get hot enough before you start cooking – they should be glowing red, with a grey, powdery surface. Ensure that everything on the barbecue is cooked thoroughly before serving (check there is no pink visible when you cut into the thickest part and that meat juices run clear) and avoid any cross contamination between raw and cooked foods. Chicken pieces or pork steaks are safest cooked thoroughly in the oven then finished off on the coals for that lovely smoked taste.

## Allergies & special diets.

You should be prepared that people might be allergic to everyday foods such as gluten, dairy or nuts. If you are providing food for people with allergies, make sure it is kept covered and clearly labelled, and be particularly careful during preparation, ensuring that the area is cleaned down, utensils and hands are washed before preparation. You must also ensure you read packaging labels carefully

## Cakes

If you make a cake at home:

- use recipes from reputable sources
- always wash your hands before preparing food
- make sure that surfaces, bowls, utensils, and any other equipment are clean
- don't use raw eggs in anything that won't be thoroughly cooked, such as icing or mousse
- keep cheesecakes and any cakes or desserts containing fresh cream in the fridge
- store cakes in a clean, sealable container, away from raw foods

On the day, when you bring in cakes from home, you should:

- transport cakes in a clean, sealable container
- make sure that cheesecake and any cakes or desserts containing fresh cream are left out of the fridge for the shortest time possible, **ideally not longer than 4 hours**
- when handling cakes use tongs or a cake slice

Event organisers should ensure that anyone involved in preparing food for an event understand the basics of good food hygiene and that they prepare and handle all high risk foods carefully.

For further advice and information, please contact us by emailing [environmentalhealth@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@sthelens.gov.uk) or phoning 01744 676789.