

Food Safety at the Workplace

September is National Food Safety Education MonthSM

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office is to refrigerate the food and leave a note instead. Example: Help yourself to the turkey and roast beef sandwiches in the refrigerator.

Situation #2

"I don't think we ever remove anything from the refrigerator at work. If we tossed everything that was past the 'use by' date on the label, the refrigerator would be almost empty by the time we got done."

FOOD SAFETY TIP:

Some companies have a policy of once-a-week tossing all lunch foods left in the refrigerator. Label any item meant to be shared with staff as "For Staff" with the date it was refrigerated and person responsible for the item. Toss any item not eaten by the third day.

Situation #3

"I'm surprised by the number of people who don't wash their hands after going to the restroom. And then they put their hands in the popcorn bowl in the break room."

FOOD SAFETY TIP:

There's a cartoon where a person is leaving the restroom and a big sign above the door flashes a warning to everyone: "Didn't Wash Hands!" A more subtle strategy might be to place a hand-washing poster in restrooms in a prominent place! *Added tip:* people who don't wash their hands probably won't look at a poster above the sink!

Consider placing posters at eye level inside bathroom stalls and in front of urinals.

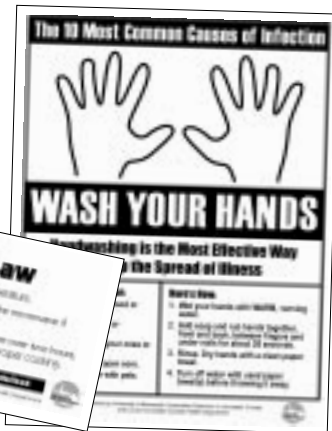
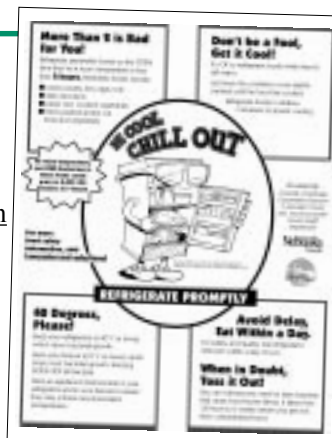
Hand-washing is considered the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Truly, your health may be in your hands!

Resources

Consider setting up an office food safety policy. Check lancaster.unl.edu/food/ftsep02.htm for information and suggestions.

Promote food safety at the office using these reproduction-ready materials online at lancaster.unl.edu/food/chill.htm:

1. Refrigerator poster
2. Table tents
3. General food safety quiz
4. Handwashing poster



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Stumped by Trees?

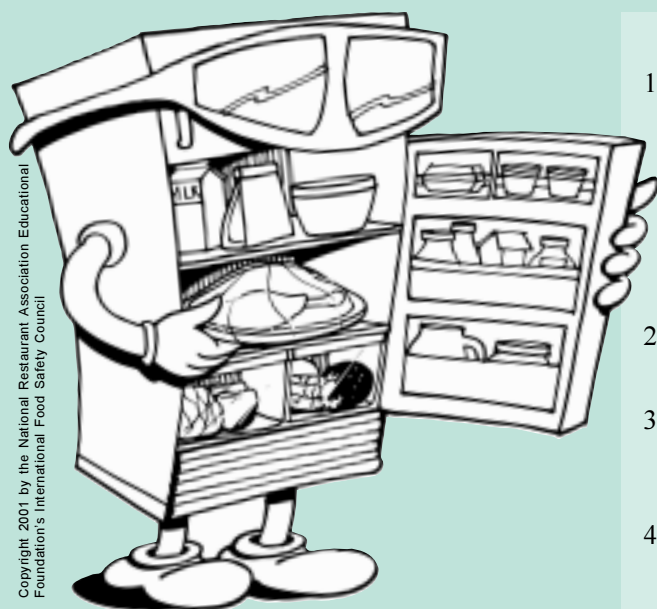
UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County has **ANSWERS!**

- Gardening
- Agriculture & Acreage
- Insects, Spiders, Mice & More
- Food Safety & Nutrition
- Family Living
- Home & Community
- and much more!!

www.lancaster.unl.edu

Test Your Refrigerator Food Safety Savvy Quiz

.NOTE: You can also take this quiz online at: lancaster.unl.edu/food/fridge.htm



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Questions

1. **Is it safe to leave perishable foods at room temperature for longer than TWO hours TOTAL time?** (Perishable foods include: meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu; dairy products; cooked pasta, rice and vegetables; fresh, peeled and/or cut fruits and vegetables.)
2. **Is it OK to refrigerate foods while they're still warm?**
3. **Should you eat refrigerated leftovers within a day or two for safety and quality?**
4. **Should you keep your refrigerator at 40° F or lower?**
5. **Can you always see, smell or taste bacteria that cause food-borne illness?**

Answers

1. **NO.** Refrigerate perishable foods so the TOTAL time they're at room temperature is less than two hours. At room temperature, just ONE bacterium in these foods could grow to 2,097,152 in seven hours!
2. **YES.** Just leave the container cover slightly cracked until the food has cooled. Refrigerate foods in shallow containers to speed cooling.
3. **YES.** Eat refrigerated leftovers promptly.
4. **YES.** Keeping your refrigerator at 40°F or lower slows bacterial growth. Keep your freezer at 0°F or lower, which stops most bacterial growth. Freezing DOES NOT kill bacteria. Keep an appliance thermometer in your refrigerator and in your freezer to assure they stay at these recommended temperatures.
5. **NO.** When in doubt, toss it out! You can't always see, smell or taste bacteria that cause food-borne illness. It takes from 1/2 hour to 6 weeks before you get sick from contaminated food.