

Spring 2025

## In This Issue:

- Food Safety for Gatherings
- Managing GI Illness

Have an infection control question?

Contact us at:

InfectionControl@la.gov

## Don't let Unsafe Food Masquerade at your Mardi Gras Celebrations

### Keep Food Out of the Danger Zone!

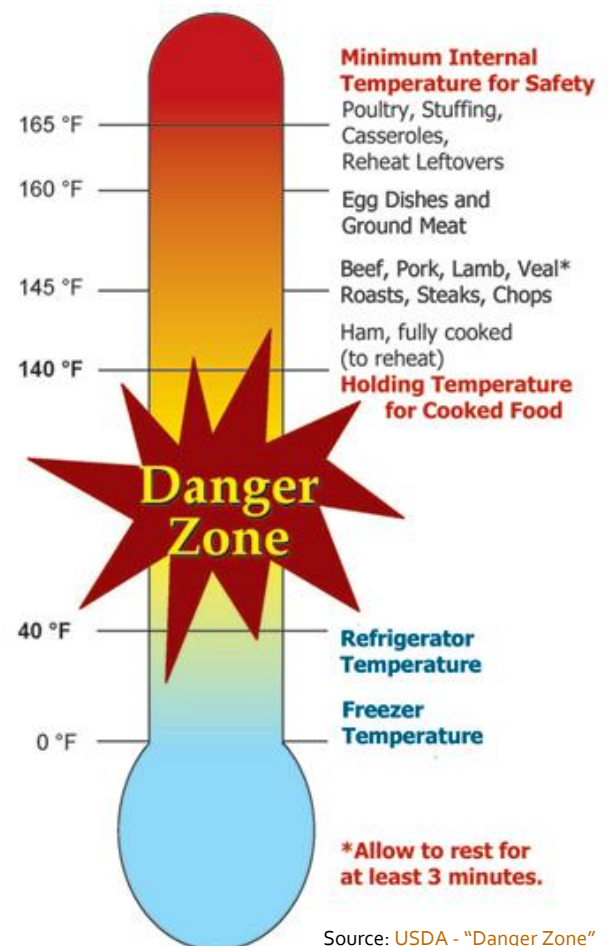
Bacteria grow rapidly between the temperatures of 40° F and 140° F.

After food is safely cooked, keep hot food at 140° F or warmer to prevent bacterial growth.

Cold perishable foods, such as chicken salad or a platter of deli meats, should be kept at 40° F or below.

When serving food at a buffet, keep hot items in chafing dishes, slow cookers or warming trays. Keep cold items chilled by nesting dishes in bowls of ice or using small serving trays that are replaced frequently.

Discard all perishable foods left at room temperature for more than two hours.



Source: [USDA - "Danger Zone"](#)

To learn more: [7 Food Safety Steps for Successful Community Meals](#)

## Food Safety Resources:

[Serving up Safe Buffets](#)

[Safe Minimum Internal  
Temperatures](#)

[Safer Food Choices](#)

[Four Simple Steps to  
Food Safety](#)

## Four Simple Steps to Food Safety



### CLEAN

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash surfaces, cutting boards and counter tops frequently.



### SEPARATE

- Keep raw meat, poultry and seafood separate from other foods to prevent cross-contamination.



### COOK

- Cook raw meat and poultry to a safe minimum internal temperature.



### CHILL

- Cold temperatures slow bacterial growth, so refrigerate promptly.

## Additional Resources:

[Symptoms, Sources and Germs](#)

[Norovirus Facts for Food Workers](#)

[Long-Term Care \(LTC\) Acute Gastroenteritis Surveillance Line List](#)

[CDC Summary of Recommendations](#)

## When Foodborne Illness Symptoms Arise

The most common symptoms of food poisoning include diarrhea, stomach pain or cramps, nausea, vomiting and fever.

### Gastrointestinal Illness in Healthcare Facilities

- Adherence to PPE use according to [Contact](#) and [Standard Precautions](#) is recommended for individuals entering the patient care area.
- Actively promote hand hygiene using soap and water among healthcare personnel, patients and visitors.
- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting patient care areas and frequently touched surfaces.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces starting from the areas with a lower likelihood of contamination (e.g., tray tables, counter tops) to areas with highly contaminated surfaces (e.g., toilets, bathroom fixtures).
- Consider submitting stool specimens as early as possible during a suspected gastrointestinal illness outbreak and ideally from individuals during the acute phase of illness (within 2-3 days of onset).

Report all GI illness outbreaks and consult your [regional epidemiologist](#) regarding the types of and number of specimens to obtain for testing.

[Louisiana Office of Public Health IDEpi](#) 24-hour on-call line

**(800) 256-2748**

Remember- vaccinations are currently NOT available for many GI illnesses, including norovirus. Prevention is possible through performance of good hand hygiene, avoiding possibly contaminated food and water, and cleaning and disinfecting affected surfaces.



How well can you stop infection from spreading when problems come up? Take the infection control challenge and find out!

[Project Firstline Diarrhea Dilemma Interactive Scenario](#)