

# Food for Port

2019 EDITION

**Welcome** to Port Stephens Council's 2019 Food for Port newsletter. This newsletter contains common questions and observations made by our Environmental Health Officers.

We hope you enjoy the quiz and learn some valuable information to help keep your food safe. The Environmental Health team wish you all the best for 2019!

## Can mobile devices pose a food safety risk?

The simple answer is yes!

A recent article by the Australian Institute of Food Safety confirmed a previous study that mobile devices can be a breeding ground for bacteria and — more importantly — pathogens. These devices can also distract staff from more important food safety tasks.

Mobile devices pose a risk of cross-contamination, especially when they are kept on food preparation benches or other areas in the kitchen where food is prepared or stored. This practice can result in bacteria being transferred from the device to the bench or even directly to the food through the food handler. Small traces of allergens can also be transferred while preparing an allergen-free meal, resulting in a potentially life threatening anaphylactic reaction.

## Quiz time! True or false?

1. Washing poultry before cooking is good practice.
2. The temperature of refrigerators and cool rooms can fluctuate even above 5°C.
3. The only way you can tell that food is 'off' is by how it smells or tastes.
4. Cross-contamination can't occur in a refrigerator or cool room because of the colder temperatures.
5. Cleaning and sanitising preparation benches and food contact surfaces is an important step in keeping food safe.

Even staff using a customer's device to take group photos at their table can be a source of contamination if the staff member doesn't wash their hands after.

So what can you do to protect your business and the public? One approach is to develop and implement a mobile device policy that clearly outlines how mobile devices are to be used when at work. This may include a requirement that mobile devices are not to be used in the kitchen, food preparation area or service area of a business. Provide suitable and secure areas for staff to store personal items including mobile devices. Also talk to staff about other good techniques like:

- never use a mobile device while in a bathroom
- clean mobile devices regularly
- wash hands after touching a mobile device
- don't share your mobile device with others.



# Food for Port

## The 2-hour / 4-hour rule

This rule is talked about a lot, but what does it really mean?

We all know that temperature control is an important factor in preventing the growth of harmful bacteria and other nasty bugs. Keeping cold food below 5°C and hot food above 60°C helps keep potentially hazardous food (PHF) safe. The temperature range between 5°C and 60°C is the 'temperature danger zone'.

However, because food-related bacteria takes time to grow to levels that cause food poisoning, it's okay for food to be in the temperature danger zone for short, measured periods of time. This is where the 2-hour / 4-hour rule helps.

So how does it work?

- Food held between 5°C and 60°C for less than 2 hours can be used, sold or put back in the refrigerator to use or sale later
- Food held between 5°C and 60°C for between 2 and 4 hours can still be used or sold, but **must not** be put back in the fridge for use or sale later
- Food held between 5°C and 60°C for 4 hours or longer **must** be thrown away. It cannot be used or sold.

It is important to remember that the time the food is inside the temperature danger zone is the **total time** including receipt, preparation, storage and display. For more information about the 2-hour / 4-hour rule, visit the NSW Food Authority website at [foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://foodauthority.nsw.gov.au)

### Hot food zone 61 to 100°C

Bacteria are destroyed

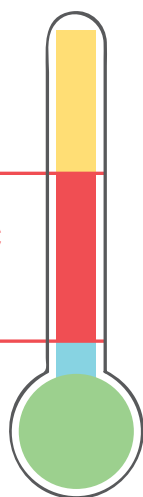
### Temperature danger zone 5 to 60°C

Bacteria grow quickly

### Cold food zone 0 to 4°C

### Frozen food zone -1 to -10°C

Bacteria don't grow



## Did you know?

The food bacteria *Campylobacter* is the leading cause of foodborne illness in Australia, with more than 25,000 notifications each year. *Campylobacter* is generally associated with raw and undercooked poultry however it can also be found in other foods. The NSW Government is committed to reducing foodborne illness by *Campylobacter* and other bacteria through its Food Safety Strategy 2015-2021. They are using targeted programs and working with Councils and the retail sector, similar to the successful strategy they used for *Salmonella*. The two most important food safety practices for reducing foodborne illness are preventing cross-contamination and effective cleaning and sanitising.

## Starting or selling a food business?

If you plan to start or sell a food business in Port Stephens, or if your business details have changed, it's important to let Council know. It's as easy as sending an email to [enviro@portstephens.nsw.gov.au](mailto:enviro@portstephens.nsw.gov.au) or complete a business registration form on our website at [portstephens.nsw.gov.au](http://portstephens.nsw.gov.au)

## Testing time for your sanitisers

You may have noticed that Council officers have been testing sanitisers during routine inspections. All sanitisers work best when they are at the correct dilution. Sanitiser test strips can be a quick and effective way to check the final concentration. Always read the manufacturer's directions, as not all sanitisers are the same and sanitiser concentration may change depending on the application. Test strips are readily available for the two most common sanitiser chemicals — quaternary ammonium compounds and chlorine. For more information, contact your chemical supplier or give Council's Environmental Health team a call.