# **Guidance for providing food to individuals during the Covid-19 pandemic.**

Due to concerns regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) many individuals and community groups are considering helping out by preparing, cooking and delivering food to persons in the community. This information is intended to help organizers to achieve good standards of food hygiene. Although the food undertaking is unlikely to be covered by food hygiene regulations, organizers must ensure that the food which is provided is safe to eat.

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* Eden District Council  
  Town Hall  
  Corney Square  
  Penrith  
  Cumbria  
  CA11 7QF

## **Preparing food at home or pop up kitchen facility**

**Good hygiene is very important and you should always do the following things:**

Wash your hands before preparing food using the “20 second rule”. If there is no wash hand basin to secure personal hygiene, plastic bowls could be used with hot and cold water, soap and supply of paper towels .The water needs to be changed and emptied regularly.

The link bellow will provide further information on the best way to ensure effective handwashing

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/sfbb-cleaning-01-hand-washing.pdf>

* Wear clean aprons/over clothing
* Tie long hair back
* Never handle food if suffering from a stomach upset or skin infection (Leave 48 hours after suffering food poisoning symptoms before preparing food).
* Do not prepare food if suffering from Covid -19 symptoms
* Make sure all worktops are clean before preparing food by using a 2 stage clean:-
  + wash the surface with hot soapy water,
  + dry with a paper towel,
  + spray with sanitizer,
  + leave on for the contact time stated on the bottle and then
  + wipe the sanitizer off with a second paper towel.
* Avoid preparing high risk foods such as sandwiches a long time in advance, especially if you do not have fridge space to store them
* If there is no fridge space available, store sandwiches, cream cakes and other high risk foods in a cool box with ice blocks and try to keep them below 8oC
* Sandwiches and other high risk chilled foods can be kept out of temperature control for a maximum of 4 hours which allows some ley way when delivering them to people’s houses.
* Make sandwiches with low risk fillings like meat paste, hard cheese etc.
* Keep ready to eat foods such as cakes and biscuits away and above any raw food, especially raw meat
* Keep food covered, preferably in a sealed container while you transport it to the premises
* Never leave sandwiches or other high risk foods in a hot car or car boot

**Cross-contamination**

Cross-contamination is when bacteria spread to food, equipment and surfaces. For instance when raw food touches ready to eat food, or when the same utensil is used to handle raw food and then used to handle ready to eat food without being washed thoroughly in between. Cross-contamination is one of the most common causes of food poisoning – to prevent it:

 clean work surfaces, chopping boards, utensils and equipment thoroughly before starting to prepare food and after they have been used to prepare food (the 2 stage clean)

 Use different chopping boards and knives for raw and ready to eat food

 Wash hands before preparing food – follow the 20 second rule

 Wash hands after touching raw food – follow the 20 second rule

**Cooking and Reheating**

One of the main food safety controls is thorough cooking and reheating. Always check that cooked or reheated food is piping hot all the way through. Poultry, pork and beef products such as chicken wings, pies, burgers, bacon and sausages must be thoroughly cooked or reheated right the way through, because products like these could have bacteria in the middle. They should not be served pink or rare.

If you have a probe thermometer then the thickest part of the joint should reach 75C make sure that the thermometer probe is cleaned before and after use. If the probe is disinfected using anti-bacterial wipes, these **must** be suitable for use with food.

If the meat isn’t going to be served straight away is should be cooled down as soon as possible to fridge temperature (8C)

**Transporting ready to eat food and meals**

Preferably hot boxes/cool boxes and containers should be used to transport food. They must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before and after use. Hot soapy water using a fresh cloth followed by using a food safe sanitizer should be used, ideally using disposable paper towel/roll.

The temperature of food must be controlled to ensure that harmful bacteria will not grow. To maintain safe food temperatures you must consider the time it takes to portion/pack the food and the travel time during delivery. Hot food must be delivered within 2 hours after cooking if it is not held at 63℃ or above.

Cold foods must be held below 8℃ (fridge temperature) to keep them safe ideally. Cold food can be held above 8℃ for one period of up to 4 hours.

Keeping a fridge thermometer in the cool box to monitor temperatures is advised. Do not store perishable products in your car overnight unless air temperature is bellow 8c.

Regardless of whether you use these time exemptions for temperature you must not serve food that has become unsafe

**Taking Orders/Serving food – allergen information**

Food allergies can be life threatening so it is very important that you consider allergens when preparing food. Are you going to be able to cater for people with specific dietary requirements? If you can’t ensure the following then you should not provide food to those that declare a food allergy

**Allergens**

If asked to produce an allergen free meal .You must provide accurate information to the consumer on what allergens are in the food which will include looking at the list of ingredients on packets and tins

There is documentation on the link bellow which you can use to record what allergens are in the foods prepared.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses>

You will need to consider any allergy requirements of the community .If you cannot When taking telephone orders or at the point of service, you will need to ask the person what allergen requirements they may have, ensure that you have the correct controls in place if you agree to provide an allergen free meal.

If you can’t adhere to these guidelines then you should refer the customer to a more specialized provider

**Storage Information**

Information must be given to the consumer on what they need to do to ensure that the food remains safe to eat once it has been delivered. For example: for immediate consumption, whether it is safe to reheat or freeze and how to do this, how to defrost and reheat.

**Duty of Care**

Any rubbish produced must be disposed of correctly .Take it to the recycling center or household waste.

If you require any further information or have any queries please contact Public Protection on 01952 381818 who will be able to help you further.