Preparing, Cooking and Serving Food Safely

Home Cooked Food Safety Guidance for Students of UBU Registered Groups

You must read this document in full and agree to adhere to this guidance to be able to prepare, cook and serve food on campus for you registered student group.

University of Bradford Union of Students

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Contents

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Overview

Good food hygiene means knowing how to avoid the spread of bacteria when cooking, preparing, and storing food. Foods that aren't cooked, stored, and handled correctly can cause food poisoning.

Risk Assessment

When preparing food at home or in the UBU kitchen to distribute to students, it is important to complete a risk assessment to reassure UBU staff that the food you will cook will be prepared, stored, transported, and handled in a safe and hygienic manner. A risk assessment helps identify potential hazards, assess their severity, and implement controls to reduce the likelihood of harm.

For your event to be approved, you will have to complete a UBU risk assessment that must satisfy UBU staff that you have done everything in your control to minimise the risk.

For a copy of the risk assessment, you must contact a member of UBU staff.

Approving the risk assessment for home cooked food can be a lengthy process so you should complete and submit it in good time.

By reading, understanding, and implementing the guidelines in this document, you should be able to conduct a thorough and robust risk assessment, minimising food safety hazards and ensuring you meet hygiene and safety standards when preparing, cooking, and distributing food to other students.

Tips on Keeping Food Safe

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

- Prepare food in advance and freeze it, if you can, but ensure the food is properly defrosted before you use it.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, using hand sanitisers if hand washing facilities are not available.
- Always wash fresh fruit and vegetables
- Keep raw and ready-to-eat foods apart.
- Do not use food past its use-by date.
- Always read any cooking instructions and make sure food is properly cooked before you serve it.
- Ensure that food preparation areas are suitably cleaned and sanitised after use and wash.
- Any equipment you are using in hot soapy water.
- Keep food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible

Chilled Food

Food that needs to be chilled, such as sandwich fillings served as part of a buffet, should be left out of the fridge for no more than four hours. After this time, any remaining food should be thrown away or put back in the fridge. If you put the food back in the fridge, don't let it stand around at room temperature when you serve it again.

Use-by Dates

Use-by dates show how long the food remains safe to eat or drink. Check and follow the use-by dates of the food you serve. Food cannot be supplied in any circumstances if its use-by date has passed. This also applies if you are supplying people with packaged food from a food bank. WRAP date labelling guidance provides advice on how to safely redistribute surplus food and avoid food waste.

High Risk Foods

Some foods are more likely to cause food poisoning than others. These include:

- Raw milk
- Raw shellfish
- Soft cheeses
- Pâté
- Foods containing raw egg.
- Cooked sliced meats.

Allergens and Labelling

There are legal implications in place to help decrease the risk of a possible allergic reaction or fatality so the below guidelines **MUST** be followed.

Some people have very severe allergies to certain foods. Such allergies can be life threatening, even if the allergic person eats just a very tiny amount of the food. Never guess. We must tell event attendees if any food we provide contain any of the listed allergens as an ingredient.

The 14 allergens are: **celery, cereals containing gluten** (such as barley and oats), **crustaceans** (such as prawns, crabs and lobsters), **eggs**, **fish**, **lupin**, **milk**, **molluscs** (such as mussels and oysters), **mustard**, **peanuts**, **sesame**, **soybeans**, **sulphur dioxide and sulphites** (at a concentration of more than ten parts per million) and **tree nuts** (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts).

This also applies to additives, processing aids and any other substances which are present in the final product.

All foods that may contain any of the above should be clearly labelled.

If a dish contains any of the foods listed above, make sure this is also reflected in the name or the menu description, for example "carrot and nut salad".

If you think someone is having a severe allergic reaction, do not move them - ring 999, explain that you think they are having an allergic reaction and ask for a paramedic.

Food Intolerances

When preparing meals for students, it is essential to be mindful of food intolerances, which differ from allergies but can still cause significant discomfort or health issues. Food intolerances occur when the body has difficulty digesting certain foods or substances, leading to symptoms such as bloating, stomach pain, gas, diarrhoea, or headaches. Below are some of the most common food intolerances:

- Lactose intolerance
- Gluten intolerance
- Fructose intolerance
- FODMAP ((Fermentable Oligo-, Di-, Mono-saccharides, and Polyols) sensitivity
- Histamine Intolerance

General Tips for Handling Food Intolerances:

- **Labelling**: Always clearly label foods that contain common intolerances (e.g., "contains lactose," "gluten-free").
- **Separation**: When possible, prepare and store foods separately to prevent cross-contact, especially for gluten-free or lactose-free options.
- **Communication**: Encourage students to inform you about their food intolerances or sensitivities ahead of time. Consider providing a list of ingredients or detailed menus.

To ensure that students know what allergens and intolerances are in your food, you must print out and display a list of ingredients for each dish.

4 Steps to Food Safety

There are 4 basic steps to food safety at home, these are known as the four C's:

1. Cleaning – making sure your hands, surfaces and equipment are clean before, during and after cooking.
2. Cooking – making sure food is cooked throughout to kill harmful bacteria.
3. Chilling – making sure foods are stored at the correct temperature to prevent growth of harmful bacteria.
4. Cross-contamination – preventing the spread of bacteria to surfaces and ready-to-eat food.

1. Cleaning

The bacteria that cause food poisoning can be found in many places around your kitchen. Unless you take care to clean your hands, surfaces, and utensils properly, these bacteria could end up in your food.

Basic tips for the kitchen include:

- Regular handwashing – Hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water at regular intervals and ALWAYS after using the toilet, touching your hair/face/phone, eating or smoking.
- Long hair must be covered/tied back.
- Areas and equipment should be cleaned and sanitised regularly.

Wash Your Hands

You should always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water:

- before you prepare, cook, or eat food.
- after handling raw food such as raw meat, uncooked eggs and unwashed fruit and vegetables
- after touching the bin, going to the toilet, blowing your nose, or touching your pets

There's a right way and a wrong way to wash your hands. To do it correctly:

- wet your hands and apply soap.
- rub your hands together to make a lather.
- scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails.
- after 20 seconds of scrubbing, rinse your hands well with warm water.
- dry your hands thoroughly using a clean towel.

Clean Worktops

Wash worktops, utensils and chopping boards with warm, soapy water before and after food preparation to prevent bacteria from spreading. This is especially important if you've been preparing raw meat, raw eggs, or unwashed vegetables.

If possible, use different utensils and chopping boards for raw and ready-to-eat foods, or wash them thoroughly between tasks.

As an extra precaution, you may wish to use a disinfectant to kill any harmful bacteria. Make sure you follow the manufacturer's instructions to ensure you apply it to the surface for the specified time and if the product needs diluted before use.

Clean Dishcloths

As dirty and damp dishcloths are the perfect place for bacteria to breed, wash dishcloths and tea towels regularly and let them dry before use.

You should wash dishcloths and tea towels using the hot cycle of your washing machine.

Pets

When preparing and cooking food, ensure that all pets are kept away from the food preparation and cooking area.

2. Cooking and Reheating Food

Harmful bacteria are killed by cooking and reheating food at the right temperature for the correct length of time. Always follow the cooking instructions on the label and check the food is steaming hot in the middle.

Cooking Rice

The reheating of rice is a common cause for concern for people as uncooked rice contains Bacillus cereus, a bacteria linked to food poisoning. Rice needs to be cooked thoroughly and served straight away without spending long at room temperature. If you are having a cold rice dish on your buffet, cool it down as quickly as possible after cooking (within one hour) and store it in the fridge for up to one day. Do not reheat rice more than once.

Cooking Meat and Poultry

Chicken, duck, pork, and offal should always be cooked through until the core temperature reaches 75°C, there is no pink meat and the juices run clear. This will kill any harmful bacteria.

These types of meats should never be eaten pink or rare.

Beef and Lamb

Beef and lamb steaks and whole joints (not rolled joints) can be served rare as long as the outside has been properly cooked (sealed), to kill any bacteria present on the surface.

Always cook burgers and sausages made from these meats all the way through. This will kill harmful bacteria – including E. coli O157 – that might have been present on the surface of the meat and then mixed through after mincing.

If possible, use a thermometer to ensure that the internal temperature reaches 75°C and make sure there's no pink meat in the middle and the juices run clear.

How to Tell When Meat is Cooked

If you have a food thermometer, the internal temperature should reach 75°C.

If you don't have a food thermometer, the meat:

- shouldn't be pink in the middle.
- juices should run clear.
- should be steaming hot throughout.
- To check whole birds, pierce the thickest part of the leg. For thicker joints, pierce the centre.

Cooking Fish, Shellfish and Crustacea

Although most fish and some shellfish (oysters) can be eaten raw, cooking will kill any bacteria present. If you choose to eat raw fish, make sure that it's been frozen first as the cold temperature will kill any parasites present.

Raw shellfish should always be cooked alive but never cook any shellfish if the shell doesn't close.

How to Tell if Fish, Shellfish and Crustacea are Cooked

Look for a change in colour and texture to tell if fish, shellfish and crustacea are cooked:

- fish flesh will turn opaque (loses its transparency) and flake easily with a fork – cook fish until it reaches 63°C with a food thermometer or fish flesh.
- prawns will turn from blue grey to pink.
- scallops, crab, and lobster flesh will become firm and turn opaque.
- clam, mussel, whelk, and oyster shells will open during cooking – never eat shellfish if the shell remains closed after cooking.

Cooking on a Barbecue

Undercooked foods and cross-contamination are the greatest risks when using a barbeque. Cooking food in the oven before finishing on the barbecue is a great way to ensure food is cooked all the way through.

To ensure food is safe to eat:

- defrost meat thoroughly before cooking – ideally in your fridge.
- keep meat and ready-to-eat foods – such as salad and bread – separate.
- regularly turn and move food around to cook evenly.
- use separate utensils for raw and cooked meats.
- don't use a sauce or marinade for cooked food that has had raw meat in it.

You'll know when your barbeque is at the right temperature for cooking when the coals are glowing red and have a powdery grey surface. Never cook food over flames as the outside will burn, but the inside will be raw and unsafe to eat.

Reheating Cooked Food

When reheating food make sure that it's steaming hot and heated all the way through.

Use chilled food within 2 days of cooking. If the food has been cooked, frozen and then defrosted, reheat, and eat within 24 hours.

You should only ever reheat food once. The more times you cool and reheat food, the higher the risk of food poisoning.

3. Chilling and Storing Food

Your fridge can help to keep foods fresh and safe to eat for longer as the cold temperature slows the growth of bacteria.

To keep your food safe:

- Keep your fridge at the right temperature (between 0°C and 5°C)
- Keep food out of the fridge for the shortest time you can.
- Don't overfill your fridge.
- Don't keep leftovers for longer than two days.
- Cool cooked food as quickly as possible (within 2 hours) then place in the fridge – splitting cooked food into smaller portions can help it to cool quicker.
- What you can store

Cooked dishes and foods labelled with a 'use by' or 'keep refrigerated' label can be stored in the fridge. This includes:

- Dairy produce – such as milk, cheese, and butter
- Raw and cooked meat
- Eggs
- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Ready meals
- Storing eggs
- Eggs are best stored in the fridge as they are kept at a constant temperature. You can safely store a boiled egg in the fridge for a couple of days.

You can also freeze boiled eggs and raw eggs that have been removed from their shells.

When cooking large portions of food, ensure it can be portioned to allow it to cool quickly enough as a large pan of rice will cool slower than a small pan.

Freezing Food

Most types of foods can be frozen; however, the extreme cold can affect the quality of foods with a high-water content – such as fresh fruit and salad vegetables (cucumber, tomatoes). These foods are still fine to cook with but are better eaten from the fridge.

As the cold air will cause foods to dry out, always store frozen foods in airtight containers or freezer bags.

Freezing Meat and Fish

You can freeze all types of meat, fish, and poultry as long as:

- it's within its use by date.
- you wrap it properly to prevent damage from dehydration and oxidation – known as "freezer burn".

Frozen meat and fish will keep and be safe to eat for a long time, however, you should try to eat these foods within 3 to 6 months as the quality can be affected. Adding a label and date to frozen meat and fish can help with this.

Defrosting

You should defrost meat and fish thoroughly before cooking as partially defrosted food may not cook evenly meaning harmful bacteria may survive. Defrost the food in a sealed container at the bottom of the fridge, to prevent it from becoming too warm or any liquid contaminating other foods in the fridge. If you intend to cook it as soon as it's defrosted, then you can use the microwave on the defrost sitting.

Once defrosted, food needs to be cooked and eaten within 24 hours.

Re-Freezing

Raw meat, fish and poultry can't be frozen again after they've been defrosted.

Cooked meat, fish and poultry can be frozen as long as they've been cooled. You should only refreeze these foods once after cooking as the more times you cool and reheat food, the higher the risk of food poisoning.

Foods stored in the freezer, such as ice cream and frozen desserts, should not be returned to the freezer once they have thawed.

4. Cross Contamination

Cross-contamination is when bacteria spread between food, surfaces, or equipment. It is most likely to happen when raw food touches (or drips onto) ready-to-eat food, equipment, or surfaces. So, if raw meat drips onto a cake in the fridge, bacteria will spread from the meat to the cake.

If you cut raw chicken on a chopping board, bacteria will spread from the chicken to the board and knife. If you then use the same board and knife (without washing them thoroughly) to chop a cucumber, the bacteria will spread from the board and knife to the cucumber.

Hands can also spread bacteria. If you touch raw food and do not wash your hands thoroughly you can spread bacteria to the other things, you touch.

Cross-contamination is one of the most common causes of food poisoning.

Do the following things to avoid it cross-contamination:

- Keep raw and ready-to-eat foods apart at all times.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after touching raw food.
- Clean work surfaces, chopping boards and equipment thoroughly before you start preparing food and after you have used them to prepare raw food.
- Ideally, use different chopping boards and knives for raw and ready-to-eat food.

Transporting Food Safely

All food must be delivered to consumers in a way that ensures that it does not become unsafe or unfit to eat.

Food that needs refrigerating must be kept cool while being transported. This may need to be packed in an insulated box with a coolant gel or in a cool bag. Equally, food that needs to be kept hot should be packed in an insulated bag.

You must ensure:

- Food is transported in packaging or containers that prevent contamination.

- Chilled and frozen foods are delivered to consumers in a way that ensures that they do not become unsafe or unfit to eat (for example, by using cool bags and boxes, or refrigerated vans)
- Raw and ready-to-eat foods are kept separately.
- Hot food is packed in an insulated bag.
- If an allergen free meal has been cooked, it should be clear when transporting it which container it is in.

Setting up and Serving Food on Campus

When planning how you set up and serve food at an event, please remember you may be able to get the equipment listed below from the SU so please do contact a member of staff for support.

Please make sure you cover the following areas in your planning:

- Hand washing facilities available: soap, hot water, and paper towels (hand sanitiser is not a substitute).
- Cleaning products, anti-bacterial sanitising spray, and paper towels (blue roll).
- Separate areas and equipment for food preparation. Use clean chopping boards, knives and utensils when preparing or serving different foods.
- Separate utensils for serving food without allergens in the ingredients.
- Storage containers and labels.
- List of ingredients and allergens, allergens listed in food titles, any packets labelled with ingredients and allergens in bold. A food matrix completed for each item.
- A disclaimer sign if you are serving any home-made items. Refrigeration or Freezer for keeping food within correct temperature ranges.
- Appropriate clothing and good personal hygiene when serving food.

What are the Risks of Serving Food

Serving food to students can pose several risks due to the amount/range of food on offer and the tendency for food to be left out at room temperature.

Common bacteria that can be found within food or in serving areas include:

- E. coli (this might be found lurking inside your lettuce or soft cheese).
- Salmonella (common in undercooked chicken or eggs).
- Listeria (this can breed quickly in pre-packed food such as sandwiches or bagged salads and is common in deli meats).

High standards of hygiene are required so food served is fit to eat.

Sanitisers and disinfectants are useful to kill bacteria and viruses in the serving area. Sanitisers can be used as part of a two-step approach; first spray and wipe the areas to remove dirt or grease, once it is visibly clean re-spray and re-wipe to disinfect the surface.

Food Temperature Considerations

The food you may be serving often contain a mixture of hot and cold food.

If you are reheating food, ensure it is cooked thoroughly. This kills the harmful bacteria that might have grown since it was first cooked.

The reheating of rice is a common cause for concern for people as uncooked rice contains *Bacillus cereus*, a bacteria linked to food poisoning. Rice needs to be cooked thoroughly and served straight away without spending long at room temperature. If you are having a cold rice dish, cool it down as quickly as possible after cooking (within two hours) and store it in the fridge for up to one day. Do not reheat rice more than once.

Cooked food needs to be held at 63°C. If you are serving or displaying it below this (for example at room temperature), it should only be left there for two hours. Food that has not been used within two hours should be discarded.

The two-hour rule states that any perishables on display should only be left out for a maximum of two hours.

Tips for Serving Food

- Always wear disposable gloves when serving food
- It is better to lay out smaller portions and leave the rest of the food in the fridge or hot food in the oven, then top up as required.
- Do not add new food on top of old, instead, once a tray has become low, just remove it, and replace with fresh stock.
- Remember bacteria can travel easily from hands, so use enough serving tongs and spoons.
- Serve the food for those attending the event to reduce the risk of contamination.
- Have a designated area for dirty plates and rubbish that is away from the serving table. Encourage guests not to hang around the serving areas and to use waste receptacles provided.
- Try to provide covers for food, especially if serving outdoors, to prevent flies landing on the items.

Reheating Food on Campus

Reheating means cooking again, not just warming up. Always reheat food until it is piping hot all the way through i.e., above 75°C for at least 30 seconds.

Food should only be reheated once.

If ovens or grills are used for reheating, make sure they are preheated. If you re reheating food in a microwave, stir it regularly to make sure the centre of the food is thoroughly heated.

Ovens and microwaves are available in the Students Union Kitchen. To book and access the kitchen for reheating food, please contact a SU member of staff.

Serving Hot Holding Food

It is very important to keep food hot until serving to prevent harmful bacteria from growing. This includes foods comprising or containing meat, fish, eggs, milks, soft cheese, cereals (including rice and pasta), pulses and vegetables.

You should use suitable equipment to keep food hot, such as a *Bain-marie*, soup kettle, or a hot cabinet.

The equipment you use must keep hot food above 63°C and ensure you adhere to the following:

- Preheat the equipment before you put any food in it.
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked and piping hot before putting it in the equipment.

- Use a temperature probe to check the temperature of food in hot holding and record this on a **Food Temperature Record Form.**

Please note, UBU does not have any equipment for hot holding food.

Serving Hot Food

If hot holding is not possible, hot food can be displayed below 63°C for a maximum of 2 hours. For example, at a buffet.

If you want to display foods this way, records must be kept of the time and finish of the display period. You must collect a **Food Temperature Record form** from a member of SU staff.

You must measure and record the temperature of food on the **Food Temperature Record Form** when the food arrives and every 30 minutes.

After 2 hours the food must be:

- Reheated until it is piping hot and then served immediately (this only applies to food that has not been reheated before), or
- Chilled down as quickly as possible and stored at 8°C or less, or
- Thrown away.

The following bakery products sold to consumers with a short shelf life are considered acceptable to be exempt from hot holding requirements:

- Uncut baked egg and milk pastry products, e.g., custard tarts, intended for sale within 24 hours of production, or
- Cooked pies, pasties, samosas, and sausage rolls that are completely encased in pastry to which nothing has been added after baking, intended to be sold on the day of production or the next day.

Signage to Display when Serving Home Cooked Food

When serving home cooked food on campus of any kind, you must display the following information:

- Food Allergy Disclaimer listing all allergens – cross out any allergen as appropriate (next page)
- Consumption of Home Cooked Food Disclaimer (page after next)
- List of ingredients for each dish to allow those with intolerances and allergies to make informed choices.

University of Bradford Union of Students

Food Allergy Disclaimer

This disclaimer must be displayed when serving food

This is homemade food that students have made in their own kitchen that is NOT made in an allergy-free kitchen. UBU cannot guarantee that these products are free from ingredients that may affect those with food allergies. We recognise the seriousness of food allergies but cannot assume any liability for adverse reactions to our products.

The following ingredients are used in the kitchens where the products have been made (delete as appropriate):

- **Cereals containing gluten**: Such as wheat, rye, barley, and oats.
- **Crustaceans**: Such as prawns, crabs, and lobsters
- **Eggs**
- **Fish**
- **Lupin**
- **Milk**
- **Molluscs**: Such as mussels and oysters
- **Mustard**
- **Peanuts**
- **Sesame**
- **Soybeans**
- **Sulphur dioxide and sulphites**: If the concentration is more than ten parts per million.
- **Tree nuts**: Such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios, and macadamia nuts.

Vegetarian/Gluten-Free Cake Allergy Disclaimer

Every attempt to identify ingredients that may cause an allergic reaction for those with food allergies has been made. However, there is always a risk of contamination in the kitchens where the products were made. Ingredients such as dairy, soy, eggs gluten etc, cannot be guaranteed to be totally absent.

University of Bradford Union of Students

Consumption of Home-Cooked Food Disclaimer

This disclaimer must be displayed when serving food

University of Bradford Union (UBU) has provided general food safety guidelines to students preparing home-cooked meals being served on campus.

By consuming this food, you acknowledge that UBU is not liable for any illness, allergic reactions, or adverse health effects that may arise from consuming these meals.

It is the responsibility of individuals preparing the food to follow safety protocols, and all students, staff and visitors consume at their own risk.

Please inform the cook of any food allergies or dietary requirements before consumption and check the displayed **Food Allergy Disclaimer**.

The SU encourages everyone to exercise caution when eating food prepared by fellow students.

University of Bradford Union of Students

Food Temperature Record Form

Area Name:

Name of Event:

Date	Time on Arrival	Food Item	Core Temperature of Food After:-				Signed (initials)
			Upon delivery	After 30 mins	After 1 hour	After 90 mins	
NO FOOD MUST BE SERVED AFTER 2 HOURS							
Highlight any results outside proper operating ranges and comment on reason.							
Minimum Hot Display Temperature: 63°C (Anything under this food must not be served)							
Record Corrective Actions							