

The Right Tools and the Right uses to Keep Food Safe

Third article in a series about preventing foodborne illness in your dining service.

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Lightning doesn't strike the same place often, but when it does, it can be catastrophic: A person killed; a forest fire started. It's the same with foodborne illnesses. An operation can get away with careless food handling . . . until they can't.

The precautions described in the preceding articles covered prevention of the most common causes of contamination, unclean hands, utensils, equipment and workspaces.

The second-highest risk is cross-contamination as microbes are transferred from one food, typically meat, poultry or fish, to another, especially foods served raw, like salads and fresh fruits.

A well-managed kitchen is equipped with colored cutting boards and often like-colored knives. Typically, it's red for raw meat; yellow for raw poultry, green for vegetables and sometimes blue for fish. If the boards and tools used for one type of food are not used for another type, the risk of cross-contamination is reduced.

You should see small buckets labeled "sanitizing solution" at all kitchen work stations. Food handlers should wash their tools in this solution between tasks, even if handling the same type of food.

Food Safety Quiz

You can find out how much your food service team knows about food safety by having them take our 10-question quiz. It's available free, with instructions and answer page. Send your request to us at info@clariongp.com and we'll send you the quiz package by return e-mail.