

How to Maintain Food Processing Equipment to Prevent Food Poisoning

Four Methods: [Choosing Food Processing Equipment](#) [Proper Equipment Placement](#) [Avoiding Contamination](#) [Cleaning Food and Equipment](#)

Food processing equipment is susceptible to contamination by salmonella, campylobacter, listeria, staphylococcus and other potentially fatal contaminants. All food equipment should be free of pathogenic microorganisms before it is used for food preparation. Preventing food poisoning is usually done by avoiding cross contamination, sterilizing equipment and removing waste immediately. It is important to maintain high standards in industrial kitchens and restaurants; however, a large amount of food poisoning cases happen in the home. It is important to set up your kitchen for easy cleaning and disposal. Learn how to maintain food processing equipment to prevent food poisoning.

Method
1

Choosing Food Processing Equipment

- 1 Buy food processing equipment that can be easily cleaned in your environment.** Although you may not have the ability to replace the food processing equipment you have, the best way to ensure it is always maintained is to buy the right size and shape for your kitchen. Ensure the equipment is not too large or dangerous to move toward water, cleansers or scrubbing apparatus.
- 2 Choose metal and plastic equipment over wood and cast iron equipment whenever possible.** Wood is difficult to clean because of the fissures in its surface and cast iron rusts easily. Metal and plastic can be sterilized more easily.
 - If you have wooden cutting boards or other equipment made of wood or cast iron, buy special sterilizers to ensure the surfaces become sterile during the cleaning process.
- 3 Choose food preparation equipment in stainless steel whenever possible.** This material does not corrode or react with acids, fats, oils or meats, unlike other types of metal.
- 4 Choose metal or melamine counter tops, if possible.** They are easy to clean and keep free of debris. Cover wooden tables or counters with plastic if you are working on them for an extended period of time.

Method
2

Proper Equipment Placement

- 1 Move equipment away from locations that attract insects or rodents.** If you have had infestation problems in the past, make sure the equipment is far away from the source and clear of waste that may attract other insects.
- 2 Place the equipment nearby running water.** This can help to drain wastes away from the area and avoid contamination.
- 3 Arrange the regular removal of food waste, peelings and scraps.** Set a schedule to dump the debris whether or not the removal container is full.
- 4 Maintain an uncluttered environment at all times.** Keep all areas that are not in use free of dishes, waste and personal belongings. The walls, floors, ceiling and appliances should be free of clutter for easy cleaning.

Method
3

Avoiding Contamination

- 1 Use food processing equipment to reheat foods to higher than 140 degrees Fahrenheit (60 degrees Celsius).** Maintain heated foods at this temperature until they are served.
- 2 Never place cooked food back onto surfaces or into equipment where raw food has been prepared.** Salmonella is killed when it is cooked, but can be reintroduced by mixing raw and cooked foods.
- 3 Store unused food in shallow airtight containers, rather than in food processing equipment.** Place them in the refrigerator as soon as possible.

Method
4

Cleaning Food and Equipment

- 1 Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 30 seconds before handling any food products.** Bacteria in urine, feces and soil can easily be introduced into food processing equipment.
- 2 Wash all raw foods before they are placed near food processing equipment.** Running water is your best defense against many types of bacteria found in soil or animal processing plants.
- 3 Clean all equipment thoroughly with a cleansing agent and hot water after use.** Make sure the equipment is completely submerged and cleaned with a scrubbing agent. Cleansing agents can include alkaline detergents, acid builders, water conditioners and oxidizing agents.
- 4 Sanitize your equipment with steam, hot water or chemicals after you clean it.** The cleaning process will make the sanitation process more effective, so do not choose 1 or the other. Buy specially formulated kitchen sanitizers whenever possible.
- 5 Wash towels and other kitchen linens daily or regularly.** Ensure wet towels or rags are never left in or near equipment, as they can harbor bacteria.
- 6 Dip wooden surfaces in a diluted chlorine solution after use to sterilize.** Hang them to dry. This includes equipment with wooden handles.

Things You'll Need

- Stainless steel equipment
- Plastic covers
- Running water
- Food waste container
- Chlorine solution
- Airtight leftover containers
- Refrigerator
- Cleansers
- Steam
- Sanitizing chemicals
- Hand soap
- Scrubbers
- Metal/melamine counters

Sources and Citations

- http://en.howtopedia.org/wiki/How_to_Design_and_Maintain_Food_Processing_Equipment_to_Prevent_Food_Poisoning
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- <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs077>

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