

Marine Safety Flash

A15-04 (15th February)



Food Hygiene & Diarrhoea

All crew members should take note of food safety as food-borne illnesses threaten the health of people who consume food that is processed unsafely. Whether handled improperly during shipping or simply not cooked thoroughly, unsafe foods can cause serious health problems. Practising good food hygiene will help avoid getting diarrhoea as a result of food poisoning. You can follow a number of rules in order to ensure that the food you eat is safe:

Wash Food

It is important to wash all fruits and vegetables before serving them raw. Even food that has been pre-washed may be unsafe if it was carried with meats or other contaminated foods between the warehouse and vessel. Wash food thoroughly with soapy water and allow it to air dry rather than using a dish cloth to dry it, as this can also spread contaminants.

Wash Your Hands

Wash your hands in warm, soapy water between tasks while cooking. This reduces the risk of cross contamination, which occurs when you handle potentially contaminated food and then spread the germs to clean food. Keeping a sink full of soapy water makes it easier to wash your hands frequently and can also assist with clean-up.

Cooking Temperature

Cook all meat to their specified cooking temperature as listed on the package. According to food industry standards, you should keep all meat at 60 degrees Celsius until it is ready to serve, and never leave cooked food to stand at room temperature for a significant length of time. When thawing meat, place the package in a bowl in the refrigerator rather than leaving it at room temperature.

Storage Temperature

It is also important to keep perishable food sufficiently cold to prevent the spread of food-borne illnesses. Keep your refrigerator temperature below 4 degrees Celsius and promptly refrigerate all food that needs to be kept cool after serving or opening. To store cooked food that is still hot, place it in a shallow dish in the refrigerator. Do not cool food by leaving them at room temperature before placing them in the refrigerator, as this can promote the growth of bacteria.

Preventing diarrhoea

To prevent the spread of infections that causes diarrhoea, you should always maintain high standards of hygiene. You should:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after going to the toilet and before eating or preparing food
- clean the toilet, including the handle and the seat, with disinfectant after each bout of diarrhoea
- avoid sharing towels, flannels, cutlery or utensils with others
- wash soiled clothing and bed linen separately from other clothes and at the highest temperature possible (for example, 60C or higher for linen), after first removing any faecal matter into the toilet

