

Food preparation – cleaning and sanitising

Fact sheet

Food safety is easier when a food business keeps its premise clean and ensures all its food contact equipment is correctly cleaned and sanitised. Cleaning and sanitising is also a requirement of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code), and all food businesses must comply with the Code.

What is cleaning?

Cleaning is the process of using a detergent and water to remove residual food matter, dust, grease, dirt, stains and smelly odours from all surfaces, fixtures, utensils and equipment.

What is sanitising?

Sanitising is the process of killing food poisoning bacteria by using heat and/or chemicals. This process must be used on food contact surfaces so that the number of bacteria is reduced to a level that is safe for food contact and does not allow infectious diseases to be passed on.

Cleaning and Sanitising are generally separate processes. A surface should be thoroughly cleaned before sanitising. Sanitising is not as effective if a surface is still dirty or detergents are still present.

Six steps to effectively clean and sanitise

- 1. Pre-clean** Remove dirt and food by sweeping, scraping, wiping or rinsing with water. Don't forget to take equipment apart at the start if needed.
- 2. Wash** Use warm water and detergent. Soak if needed.
- 3. Rinse** Rinse off detergent and any remaining food or dirt.
- 4. Sanitise** Sanitise to eliminate/reduce microorganisms to safe levels.
- 5. Final rinse** Rinse off sanitiser if needed.
- 6. Dry** Air dry or use a single use towel or clean tea towel.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

- What are disinfectants then?
- If I use heat to sanitise, how hot does it need to be?
- What chemicals can I use to sanitise and how do I know if I'm using it correctly?
- Can I use chemicals that are combined detergent-sanitisers?
- What about using dishwashers to clean and sanitise?

Information on these questions can be found at: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/foodstandards.