



CONTAMINATION ALLERGENS

- Storing chemicals above or next to food risks chemical contamination if the cleaner leaks or splashes onto the food.
- A foreign object such as glass, metal shavings, bandages, or bone is physical contamination.
- Sesame became the ninth major allergen in the U.S.
- Almonds are tree nuts, along with walnuts, cashews, pecans, and pistachios.
- A strong ammonia smell, dull sunken eyes, and slimy or soft flesh indicate spoilage, so the fish should be rejected.
- Soy is a hidden allergen in many sauces, dressings, marinades, and processed foods, so staff must read labels.
- A metal fragment from a scouring pad in food is a physical contaminant that could injure a guest.

FOODBORNE ILLNESS

- Cold TCS (Time/Temperature Control for Safety) food must be held at **41 °F** or below. [FDA Food Code §3-501.16](#)
- TCS food reheated for hot holding must reach **165 °F** for 15 seconds within **2 hours**. [FDA Food Code §3-403.11](#)
- Poultry must be cooked to **165 °F** for 15 seconds because it commonly carries Salmonella and Campylobacter. [FDA Food Code §3-401.11](#)
- FAT TOM stands for Food, Acidity, Temperature, Time, Oxygen, and Moisture, the six factors that control bacterial growth.
- Cut melons, including cantaloupe, are TCS foods because cutting exposes the moist, low-acid flesh where bacteria can grow.
- Nontyphoidal Salmonella is commonly found in poultry, eggs, meat, and fresh produce, and cross-contamination spreads it.

HOLDING SERVICE

- Hot TCS food must be held at **135 °F** or higher. [FDA Food Code §3-501.16](#)
- Used plates carry saliva and food residue that can contaminate serving utensils and displayed food. [FDA Food Code §3-304.17](#)
- Self-service displays must be labeled so consumers know what they are taking, which also supports allergen awareness.
- Without a proper warewashing setup, used tableware cannot be washed, rinsed, and sanitized on site.
- Only a direct internal measurement with a calibrated, sanitized probe confirms the food itself is at **135 °F** or above. [FDA Food Code §4-302.12](#)

PREP COOKING

- Correct small-batch prep keeps most of the product at **41 °F** or lower while only a workable amount is on the table.
- Poultry must reach a minimum internal temperature of **165 °F** held for at least 15 seconds. [FDA Food Code §3-401.11](#)
- The first cooling stage requires food to drop from **135 °F** to **70 °F** within **2 hours**. [FDA Food Code §3-501.14](#)

