# Best Practices

## KITCHEN & FOOD SAFETY FACT SHEET

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

## BASIC GUIDELINES

- No running around the preparation area
- Keep trash off the floor and counters
- Sanitize all work surfaces prior to starting food preparation
- Start with clean utensils, totes, and equipment/supplies
- Place eggs in a small bowl to prevent them from rolling onto the floor before you can use them
- Before preheating an oven, move oven racks to the needed positions
- Keep raw foods separate from ready to eat foods
- Be sure an appliance is in the "off" position before plugging it in.
- Keep portable appliances unplugged when not in use
- Avoid using any appliance with a frayed or worn cord
- Use a barrier when handling foods if possible. (Gloves, spoons, spatulas, tongs, deli tissue, wax paper etc.) Both gloves and a utensil are not necessary when serving/preparing food, only one barrier is needed.
- Gloves may only be used for one task and must be changed if damaged or anytime they become contaminated. This includes if a participant touches a part of their exposed skin, raw meats and unwashed foods, or if they perform a task such as touching trash, cords, cleaning tools, etc.
- Hold by the edges to put on hands, do not blow into them or roll them up your hands
- Have gloves that fit, and are not too big
- Wipe up all spills immediately with paper towel, cloth or mop
- Keep cupboard doors and drawers closed unless in use
- Turn handles of sauce pans away from the walk area when being used
- Clean and sanitize utensils between uses
- Dry hands well before using electric cords or appliances
- Use only dry hot pads or oven mitts, damp ones conduct heat
- Always open oven, stove or microwave door/lid a crack to vent some steam before looking and tilt lid away from you so steam is released away from your face
- Use a thermometer to determine doneness of foods, clean and sanitize after each use.
- Insert thermometer at least two inches into the thickest part of the food avoiding fat and bones.
- For thinner foods, place the thermometer through the side of the food or between two pieces.
- Thermometers are not designed to remain in the food while it is cooking but should be used near the end of the estimated cooking time to check for final cooking temperatures.
- Color and texture are not indicators of doneness.
- Have a plan for where you'll go with a pan when you take it out of the oven or off the stovetop,
- Have cooling racks and counter savers in place
- Always turn the burners/skillets off when finished
- Disconnect appliances by pulling out the plug, not by tugging on the cord
- Unplug small appliances before cleaning
- Always use a cutting board to protect yourself and the counter
- Do not hold the food in your hand to cut it, even if it is only an apple
- Wash knives and sharp objects separately
- Never place knives in sink filled with soapy dish water
- Store knives in a special compartment or holder

# PERSONAL HYGIENE

Have hair restraint cap, chef's hat, bandana, visor, or hair net etc. (keeps hair from contacting exposed food)

No jewelry or big ear rings (risk of contamination)

Do not wear clothing that is loose or drapes below your wrists

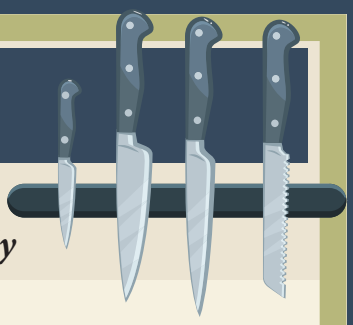
No chewing gum or eating while prepping or presenting

Open cuts/sores MUST be completely covered with waterproof bandage AND covered with a glove if on the hand

Do not compete if you have persistent discharge from eyes, nose and mouth or are exhibiting symptoms of a foodborne illness (ie. vomiting and/or diarrhea)

Use clean aprons/clothing and closed toed shoes

# KNIFE SAFETY



***Select the correct knife for the job and cut into the cutting board away from your body***

## CHEF'S KNIFE

A chef's knife is usually the largest knife in the kitchen, with a wide blade that is 8" to 10" long. Choose a knife that feels good and balanced in your hand. The knife should have a full tang. This means that the blade should go all the way through the handle for the best wear and stability.

## PARING KNIFE

Paring knives are generally 2-1/2-4" in length. The most often used knife in the kitchen. It is ideal for peeling and coring fruits and vegetables, cutting small objects, slicing, and other hand tasks.

## UTILITY KNIFE

Utility knives are longer than paring knives but smaller than chef's knives, usually around 5-8" long. They are also called sandwich knives because they are just the right size for slicing meats and cheeses.

## BONING KNIFE

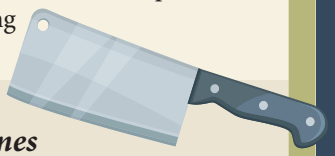
This knife has a more flexible blade to curve around meat and bone. Generally 4-5" long.

## BREAD KNIFE

Bread knives are usually serrated. Most experts recommend a serrated knife that has pointed serrations instead of wavy serrations for better control and longer knife life. You must use a sawing motion when using a serrated knife.

## CAN OPENER

Used to open sealed metal cans. Hold the handle of the can opener, not the sharp edge. After the lid has been cut off the can, pick it up carefully and discard. Look for pieces of the label or metal shavings from the can in the food after opening (physical contamination)



***Keep Knives sharp!***
***Sharp knives are safer than dull ones***

# PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

### PREVENTING FIRE

Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen & know how to use it

Avoid leaving the kitchen if you have food cooking or baking, if you must leave, carry a timer with you to remind you to return on time

Always turn the oven or stove top to off when finished

Smother a grease fire with a tight-fitting lid, never use water it will spread

Clothing on fire: remember stop, drop, roll to smother it

### ELECTRIC SHOCK

Avoid using any appliance with a frayed or worn cord

Keep portable appliances unplugged when not in use

Be sure an appliance is in the "off" position before plugging it in

Never insert metal utensils in electrical appliances that are plugged in

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION