



## How to Use this Book

This book is a mini-dictionary to use in your Food Manager Certification Course or other food safety training. It can help you to learn important food safety words. Look up a word and read what it means. If you know a word but cannot remember what a word means, look it up in your mini-dictionary!

This is your book. You can write notes on each page or on the pages at the back of the book. There are Thinking Questions on some of the pages. Think about these questions and try to answer them. Thinking Questions can help you learn some of the important food safety words in this book.



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**Allergen** (AL-er-jen): Causes an allergic reaction.  
See allergic reaction.

**Allergic reaction** (uh-LER-jick ree-ACK-shun): Getting sick with itching, sneezing, a hard time breathing or even passing out. Certain foods, like shellfish, eggs or nuts can cause allergic reactions in some people.

**Apparel** (uh-PARE-uhl): Clothes.

**Backflow** (BAK-floh): The backward flow of dirty water into food or potable (safe to drink) water.  
See potable.

**Backflow-prevention device** (BAK-floh pree-VEN-shun dee-VISE): A special part, like a valve or air gap, on water pipes that blocks dirty water from going back into the sink. See backflow.

**Bacteria** (Bak-TEER-ee-uh): Tiny living things that are not animals or plants. You can only see them through a microscope, and you cannot smell or taste them. Some bacteria are helpful, other bacteria can cause sickness. The bacteria that cause sickness are often called germs. See microorganisms.

**Bare-hand contact** (BARE-hand KON-takt): To pick up or touch food with bare hands—without gloves on or without using utensils.

**THINKING QUESTION**

Has anyone in your family ever had an **allergic reaction** to a food? What happened?

**Biological contamination** (bye-oh-LOJ-ih-kuhl kun-tam-ih-NAY-shun): When harmful microorganisms or toxins get into food and make it unsafe to eat. See microorganisms. See toxin.

**Biological hazard** (bye-oh-LOJ-ih-kuhl HAZ-erd): Any microorganism or toxin that can cause foodborne illness. Includes bacteria, viruses and parasites. Other words for this are biological contaminant and microbial contaminant. See microorganisms. See toxin. See foodborne illness. See bacteria. See virus. See parasite.

**Boiling point method** (BOY-ling POYNT METH-ud): A way to check a thermometer to be sure it is working correctly. You dip the thermometer into boiling water and look to see if it shows 212 degrees F (100 degrees C). If it does not, you must reset the thermometer to show the correct temperature for boiling water, 212 degrees F.



**Calibrate** (KAL-ih-brayt): To check a thermometer to be sure it is working correctly, and resetting it if it does not show the correct temperature. Different ways to calibrate a thermometer are the boiling point method and the ice point method. See boiling point method. See ice point method.

**Carbohydrates** (car-boh-HI-drayts): Starchy foods like potatoes, rice, breads, and sugars.

**Carrier** (CARE-ee-er): A person or animal whose body holds a pathogen (a germ that causes sickness) that can be passed to other people, even if the person with the germ does not look or feel sick. See pathogens.

**CDC** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: CDC is the government agency that works to prevent and control diseases (sickness) in the U.S. CDC also keeps track of how many people get sick from foods and why.



### THINKING QUESTION

What can a food worker do to avoid **bare-hand contact** with food?

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**Chemical contamination** (KEM-ick-uhl kun-tam-ih-NAY-shun): When harmful chemicals get into food and make it unsafe to eat.

**Chemical hazard** (KEM-ick-uhl HAZ-erd): Harmful chemicals that can get into food. Includes pesticides (bug killing chemicals), cleaning compounds, and harmful metals. Another word for it is chemical contaminant. See cleaning compound.

**Cleaning compound** (KLEEN-ing KOM-pownd): Soap or detergent used to clean pots, dishes, utensils, equipment and food preparation areas. See clean. See food preparation area. See utensil.

**Clean** (KLEEN): To remove all dirt and bits of food that you can see, from dishes, countertops, cutting boards and other food contact surfaces. Cleaning is NOT the same as sanitizing. See food contact surface. See sanitize.

**Cold-holding** (COLD-hold-ing): Keeping cold foods cold, and out of the Danger Zone. This means keeping cold foods at a temperature of 41 degrees F (5 degrees C) or lower. See Danger Zone.

**Contaminant** (kun-TAM-ih-nint): Anything that gets into food, naturally or by accident, that can cause sickness.



**Contamination** (kun-tam-ih-NAY-shun): When harmful germs, chemicals or foreign objects get into food, either naturally or by accident. Food that has been contaminated can make people sick and is not safe to eat. See biological contamination. See chemical contamination. See physical contamination. See foreign object.

**Corrective action** (kor-REK-tiv AK-shun): Steps taken to fix a problem in the flow of food. Actions taken by food workers to stop a hazard from making food unsafe to eat. See hazard.

**Cross-connection** (KRAWS-kuh-NEK-shun): A link between a source of clean water (like a faucet) and a source of dirty water (like a drain, sewer or mop bucket). The link can let the dirty water mix in with the clean water, making it unsafe to drink or use. One kind of cross-connection in food service establishments is a rinse hose (dirty water) with one end attached to a faucet (clean water), and the other end sitting in soapy water in a pot sink. See foodservice establishments.

**Cross-contamination** (KRAWS-kun-tam-ih-NAY-shun): When harmful germs are passed from one food or object to another food or object. The germs can be passed by dripping food juices, by dirty utensils, cutting boards or equipment, and by food workers' hands. See utensil.

**THINKING QUESTION**

What is the difference between cleaning and sanitizing a food container?

**Danger Zone** (DAYN-jer zohn): Temperatures between 41 degrees and 135 degrees F (5 and 57 degrees C).

These are the temperatures at which bacteria in food grow fastest.

**Disease-causing agent** (diz-ZEEZ KAW-zing AY-jent): Something that causes sickness. Includes germs like bacteria, viruses, toxins and parasites, and also chemicals. See bacteria. See virus. See toxin. See parasite.

**Dispenser** (Diss-PEN-ser): A container that gives out something a little at a time, like a soap dispenser.

**Disposable** (diss-POZE-uh-bull): Made to be used once and then thrown away. For example, plastic forks and paper cups are disposable.



**FAT TOM** Food, Acidity, Temperature, Time, Oxygen, Moisture: These six things are what bacteria need to grow. To keep foods safe it is important to control one or more of these six things.

**FDA** Food and Drug Administration: The FDA is the U.S. government agency that protects the health of people by working to make sure that drugs (medicines) and food products are safe.

**FDA Food Code** (FDA FOOD cohnd): A set of guidelines for preparing foods safely, that is written by the FDA. Massachusetts and other states use the FDA Food Code as a model when they make rules about food safety for foodservice establishments. See FDA. See food safety. See foodservice establishments.

**Fecal-oral contamination** (FEE-kuhl OR-uhl kun-tam-in- AY-shun): When human waste gets into food or water and makes it unsafe. This can happen when a food worker does not wash hands correctly after going to the toilet, and then prepares food.

**Finger cot** (FING-er kot): A tight rubber covering worn over a bandaged finger to keep the bandage in place and stop it from falling into food.

**Flow of food** (FLOH uv food): All the steps that food goes through in a foodservice establishment, from beginning to end. The steps include: Receiving (getting



deliveries), Storing, Preparation (washing, cutting, mixing), Cooking, Hot-holding, Cooling, Cold-holding, Serving and Reheating. Food workers must do the right things at each step in the flow of food to keep foods safe. See foodservice establishments. See hot-holding. See cold-holding.

**Food allergy** (FOOD AL-er-jee): When people have an allergic reaction when they eat a certain food. Some foods that cause allergic reactions in some people are: milk, eggs, wheat products, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish. See allergic reaction.

**Food contact surface** (FOOD-kon-takt SER-fiss): Any part of equipment, utensils, dishes, cutting boards, containers or wrappings that directly touches food. See utensil.

**Food safety** (FOOD SAYF-tee): Doing everything that must be done to keep food safe and healthy to eat.



### THINKING QUESTION

Why are the temperatures between 41 and 135 degrees F called the **Danger Zone**?



**Foodborne** (FOOD-born): Carried in food.

**Foodborne illness** (FOOD-born IL-ness): Sickness caused by eating contaminated food. Some people call it “food poisoning.” See contamination.

**Foodborne illness outbreak** (FOOD-born IL-ness OWT-brayk): When two or more people get the same illness after eating the same food from the same place.

**Foodborne infection** (FOOD-born in-FEK-shun): A sickness caused by eating a food that contains harmful microorganisms (germs) that grow inside the body. See microorganisms.

**Foodborne intoxication** (FOOD-born in-tock-sick-AY-shun): A sickness caused by eating food that contains a toxin (poison). See toxin.

**Foodborne toxin-mediated infection** (FOOD-born TOCK-sin MEE-dee-ay-ted in-FEK-shun): A sickness caused by eating food containing bacteria that also make toxins. The person gets sick from both the toxin (intoxication) and the bacteria (infection). See bacteria. See toxin. See foodborne intoxication. See foodborne infection.

**Food grade** (FOOD-grayd): Safe to use in contact with food.

**THINKING QUESTION**

What are some ways that **contamination** of food can happen?

**Food handler** (FOOD hand-ler): A person who works with food, food containers, food equipment or utensils. See utensil.

**Foodhandling practices** (FOOD-hand-ling PRAK-tiss-iz): Ways that people touch or handle food.

**Food preparation area** (FOOD prep-er-AY-shun AIR-ee-uh): Places in the kitchen where food is made ready to eat. Includes tables, countertops, sinks, stoves and ovens.

**Foodservice establishments** (FOOD-ser-viss ess-TAB-lish-mints): Any place that prepares, serves or sells food to people. Includes stores, restaurants, bars, schools, day care centers, hospitals, sports arenas, army bases, prisons, businesses and other places.

**Foreign object** (FAR-in OB-jekt): Something in food that should not be there, like hair, a staple or a piece of glass. See physical hazard.



### THINKING QUESTION

How does a person get a foodborne illness?

**Fungi** (FUN-jye): A group of microorganisms that includes molds and yeasts. See microorganisms. See molds. See yeasts.

**Gastrointestinal illness** (gas-troh-in-TEST-in-uhl IL-ness): A sickness in the stomach or bowels. Signs of gastrointestinal illness include vomiting (throwing up), diarrhea (loose stools) and nausea (feeling like you are going to throw up). Food that is not safe can cause gastrointestinal illness.

**HACCP Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point**: A system to make sure food is prepared safely at every step in the flow of food. See flow of food.

**Hair restraint** (HARE ree-STRAYNT): A hair net or hat that a food worker wears to keep his or her hair covered and away from food.

**Hand sanitizer** (HAND SAN-ih-tize-er): A soap or liquid rubbed onto the hands to kill harmful germs on the hands. Using hand sanitizers does NOT take the place of handwashing.

**Hazard** (HAZ-erd): A danger to people's health. There are different types of hazards that can affect food. These include biological hazards, chemical hazards and physical hazards. See biological hazard. See chemical hazard. See physical hazard.

**High risk populations** (HI RISK pop-yoo-LAY-shuns): Groups of people who get sick more easily than others from eating contaminated food. High risk populations include babies and young children, old people, pregnant women and people whose immune systems don't work well due to other illnesses. See immune system.

**Hot-holding** (HOT-hold-ing): Keeping hot foods hot, and out of the Danger Zone. This means keeping hot foods at a temperature of 135 degrees F (57 degrees C) or higher. See Danger Zone.

**Ice point method** (ICE-poynt METH-ud): A way to check a thermometer to be sure it works correctly. You dip the thermometer into crushed ice and look to see if it shows 32 degrees F (0 degrees C). If it does not, you must reset the thermometer to show the correct temperature for ice, 32 degrees F.

**Immune system** (im-YOON SIS-tum): The parts of the body that work together to fight sickness.

**Infected lesion** (in-FEK-tid LEE zyun): A cut or sore that has bacteria in it. See bacteria.



**Infectious** (in-FEK-shuss): Spreading germs, or passing on an illness.

**Ingestion** (in-JESS-chun): Eating or drinking, and swallowing food or drink.

**Ingredients** (in-GREE-dee-entz): What is in a food or meal. What the food is made of.

**Internal temperature** (in-TERN-uhl TEMP-ruh-choor): The temperature deep inside the food. Not the temperature on the surface of the food or in the oven.

**Investigation** (in-vess-tih-GAY-shun): Done by the Health Department when there is a complaint or a foodborne illness outbreak happens. Then steps can be taken to prevent another outbreak. See foodborne illness outbreak. See prevention.

**IPM Integrated Pest Management** (IN-teh-gray-ted PEST MAN-ij-mint): IPM is a program to stop pests, like bugs or mice, from contaminating food. Food establishments that use IPM use three pest control methods: 1) Use barriers (like doors, screens, containers with lids) to keep pests away from food; 2) Keep food preparation areas and food storage areas clean; and 3) If the first two methods fail, work with a licensed pest control professional to get rid of pests with chemicals and other means. See pest. See contamination. See food-service establishments. See food preparation area.

**J** **Jaundice** (JAWN-diss): When someone's skin or the whites of the eyes turn yellow. Jaundice is a sign of a sickness called Hepatitis A.

**Jurisdiction** (joor-iss-DICK-shun): The area covered by a regulatory agency. See regulatory agency.

**M** **Microorganisms** (mike-roh-OR-gun-iz-ums): Very tiny living things that can only be seen through a microscope. Includes bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi. Some microorganisms are helpful to people and others are harmful. Another word for this is microbes. The microorganisms that make people sick are also called germs. See bacteria. See virus. See parasite. See fungi.

**Molds** (MOLDZ): Microorganisms that look fuzzy and can spoil food. Some molds also make toxins if they are in food long enough. See microorganisms. See toxin.

**MSDS** **Material Safety Data Sheet**: The MSDS is a form that gives important information about chemical products (such as cleaning compounds) to people who work with them. It tells how the chemical can be harmful to people, how to handle the chemical safely, and how to give first aid if the chemical gets into or onto a person. Material Safety Data Sheets are part of a program for workplace safety to keep people safe at work. See cleaning compound.

**Onset time (ON-set time):** The amount of time between when a person eats contaminated food and when they show signs of sickness. See contamination.

**Parasite (PARE-uh-site):** A microorganism that lives in some animals, fish or plants. The parasite needs the animal, fish or plant in order to live. People can get sick if they eat a live parasite in food, which will then grow in them.

**Pasteurized (PASS-choor-ized):** Foods like milk or cider, that have been heated to a high temperature for a short period of time to destroy bacteria that cause sickness. See bacteria.

**Pathogens (PATH-oh-jenz):** Microorganisms that cause sickness. Includes bacteria, viruses, and parasites. See microorganisms. See bacteria. See virus. See parasite.

**Personal hygiene (PER-sun-uhl HI-jeen):** Keeping yourself clean by having good health habits—like bathing, washing hair, wearing clean clothes and washing hands often.

**Pests (PESTS):** Bugs or animals like mice. Pests can carry harmful germs and bring them into food.

**pH:** The measure of how much acidity is in a food.



**THINKING QUESTION**

Where should you put the thermometer to take the **internal temperature** of a food?

**Physical contamination** (FIZZ-ih-kuhl kun-tam-in-AY-shun): When foreign objects, like glass, hair or fingernails, get into food. Such objects in food can hurt people or make them sick. See foreign object.

**Physical hazard** (FIZZ-ih-kuhl HAZ-erd): Dirt, glass, metal and other solid things that should not be in food. Another word for it is physical contaminant. Sometimes called a foreign object. See foreign object.

**Policies** (PAH-liss-seez): Rules that tell you the way things should be done in a foodservice establishment. See foodservice establishments.

**Potable water** (POH-tuh-bull WAW-ter): Water that is safe to drink.

**Potentially hazardous foods** (poh-TEN-shuh-lee HAZ-er-duss FOODS): Foods that harmful germs can grow in easily, if we don't handle the foods correctly.

**THINKING QUESTION**

How do **pathogens** harm people?

**Preservative** (pree-ZERV-uh-tiv): Added to foods to help keep them from spoiling (going bad). Preservatives keep food from spoiling by slowing the growth of bacteria, molds and yeasts. See spoilage. See bacteria. See molds. See yeasts.

**Prevention** (Pree-VEN-shun): Steps taken to stop something bad from happening. Taking action to protect customers from foodborne illness or to protect workers from getting hurt is prevention. See foodborne illness.

**Protein** (PROH-teen): Foods with lots of protein in them include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk and milk products like cheese.

**Ready-to-eat food** (RED-ee-too-eet FOOD): Foods that are not cooked or prepared any more before we can eat them. Breads, cooked meats, sandwiches, soups and salads are ready-to-eat foods.

**Regulations** (reg-yoo-LAY-shuns): Rules made by the government that foodservice establishments must follow. There are regulations for keeping foods safe at every stage of the flow of food. See foodservice establishments. See flow of food.

**Regulatory agency** (REG-yoo-luh-tor-ee AY-jen-see): A government office that makes rules that foodservice establishments must follow. State and local health departments are regulatory agencies. See foodservice establishments.

**Reputable food source** (REP-yoo-tuh-bull FOOD sors): A supplier that is approved by a regulatory agency. A food supplier that you can trust to provide good, safe food. See suppliers. See regulatory agency.

**Requirements** (ree-KWIRE-mints): Actions you must take, or conditions you must meet in order to follow regulations and get a certificate or a license. See regulations.

**Saliva** (suh-LIE-vuh): The fluids in the mouth (spit). Saliva contains harmful germs that can get into food through sneezing on hands or dirty utensils. See utensil.

**Sanitize** (SAN-ih-tize): Using heat or chemicals to reduce the number of microorganisms on a surface to a safe level. Sanitizing is done to food contact surfaces that have already been cleaned. See microorganisms. See food contact surface. See clean.



**Single-use gloves** (SING-uhl-yoos GLUVS): Plastic gloves that you should throw away after you use them.

**Spoilage** (SPOY-lidj): When food starts to look, taste or smell rotten. Food spoilage is caused by yeasts, molds and some kinds of bacteria. See yeasts. See molds. See bacteria.

**Spore** (SPOR): A wall or coating that some bacteria put around themselves to protect them. Spores can keep bacteria from being destroyed by heating, freezing or sanitizing. See bacteria. See sanitize.

**Suppliers** (suh-PLY-er): Businesses that sell food products, containers, dishes, food equipment and tools to your foodservice establishment. See foodservice establishments.

**Susceptible** (suh-SEPT-uh-bull): Someone who can get sick. Some people are more susceptible to foodborne illnesses than other people. Very young people, very old people, or people whose immune system doesn't work well due to another illness may be more susceptible to foodborne illness than other people. See foodborne illness. See immune system.

**Symptom** (SIMP-tum): Changes in the body that are signs of sickness, like stomach ache, fever or vomiting (throwing up).

**Tampering** (TAMP-er-ing): To damage or put something harmful into food on purpose.

**Temperature** (TEMP-ruh-choor): The amount of hotness or coldness of something (like food or drinks), as measured by a thermometer.

**Time-temperature abuse** (time-TEMP-ruh-choor uh-BYOOS): Letting foods stay too long in the Danger Zone. It can also mean not cooking or reheating foods long enough to kill harmful germs. See Danger Zone.

**Toxin** (TOCK-sin): A poison that can make a person sick. There are toxins in some plants, some mushrooms and some fish. Certain bacteria and molds make toxins in food. Other microorganisms make toxins in the body. See bacteria. See molds. See microorganisms.



### THINKING QUESTION

What is another word for **toxin**?

**USDA** United States Department of Agriculture: A government agency that works to make sure that meat, poultry and egg products are safe.

**Utensil** (yoo-TEN-suhl): A tool used to pick up, stir or serve food. Examples are a spoon, fork or tongs.

**Virus** (VYE-russ): The smallest microorganism that can make people sick. A virus needs a person or an animal in which to grow. Viruses are usually spread through unwashed hands. See microorganisms.

**Yeasts** (YEESTS): Microorganisms that need sugar and wetness to live. Some yeasts spoil foods. Other yeasts are helpful and used to make wines and other foods. See microorganisms.

**THINKING QUESTION**

Why do you **calibrate** a thermometer?

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## Foodborne Pathogens

**Anisakis** (ah-nee-SOCK-iss): A parasite that can cause a foodborne infection. It may be found in raw or undercooked fish and other seafood. Correct cooking can kill the parasite so that it does not cause illness. If the seafood is to be eaten raw, deep freezing of the food can also kill the parasite. See parasite. See foodborne infection.

**Bacillus cereus** (buh-SILL-us SEER-ee-us): A bacteria that can cause a foodborne intoxication. It may be found in cooked starchy foods like rice, pasta and potatoes that are not cooled correctly, or not hot-held correctly after cooking. See bacteria. See foodborne intoxication. See hot-holding.

**C. botulinum** (see bot-yoo-LINE-um): A bacteria that can cause a foodborne intoxication that can kill you. It may be found in canned foods that were not canned the right way or were damaged. It can also be found in some kinds of cooked foods, like baked potatoes or grilled onions, that were not held at safe temperatures. See bacteria. See foodborne intoxication.

**Ciguatera** (see-gwuh-TARE-uh): A toxin that can cause a foodborne intoxication. It is a toxin that occurs naturally and is sometimes found in tropical fish like barracuda, snapper and grouper. See toxin. See foodborne intoxication.



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**E. coli (Escherichia coli)** (ee KOH-lie) (esh-er-EE-shee-uh KOH-lie): A bacteria that can cause a foodborne toxin-mediated infection. It may be found in foods like ground beef that have been contaminated by animal wastes or sewage. It can also be found in fruit juices that were not pasteurized. Correct cooking or pasteurization can kill these bacteria, so that they do not cause illness in the person eating the food. See bacteria. See foodborne toxin-mediated infection. See contamination. See pasteurized.

**Hepatitis A** (hep-uh-TITE-iss): A virus that can cause a foodborne infection. Hepatitis A can get into food when food handlers who are sick with this virus do not wash their hands after using the toilet. The virus can also be found in water contaminated by sewage, and in shellfish taken from contaminated water. See virus. See foodborne infection. See food handler. See contamination.

**Listeria** (liss-TEER-ee-uh): A bacteria that can cause a foodborne infection. It may be found in dairy products that were not pasteurized, and in some contaminated processed meats like hot dogs or bologna that are refrigerated for several weeks. See bacteria. See foodborne infection. See pasteurized.

**Salmonella** (Sal-muh-NELL-uh): A bacteria that can cause a foodborne infection. It is often found in poultry products and may be found in shell eggs. This bacteria



is also often found in the stools of infected food employees. It can cause illness when these foods are served raw or are undercooked. See bacteria. See foodborne infection.

**Staphylococcus aureus** (staff-ih-loh-COCK-iss OR-ee-us): A bacteria that can cause a foodborne intoxication when cooked foods are not cooled the right way or are held at unsafe temperatures. This bacteria is also found in human cuts and sores See bacteria. See foodborne intoxication.

**Trichinella** (trick-ih-NELL-uh): A parasite that can cause a foodborne infection. It may be found in undercooked pork or wild game meat. See parasite. See foodborne infection.

**Vibrio** (vih-BREE-oh): A bacteria that can cause a foodborne infection. It may be found in fish or shellfish that is raw or not cooked the right way. See bacteria. See foodborne infection.



### THINKING QUESTION

What are the **food contact surfaces** in your own kitchen at home?



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