

Simply Clean and Safe



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By being proactive and investing in your establishment's food safety, not only are you ensuring that your customers are happy repeat customers, but you are going a long way in protecting the reputation of your business.

As more and more Canadians are dining out, food safety control is increasingly becoming a concern for both consumers and the food industry. Though Canada's food supply is one of the safest in the world, foodborne illnesses are nevertheless fairly common. Health Canada tracks outbreaks and publishes the statistics in its annual report "Foodborne and Waterborne Disease in Canada". It is estimated that for every case of foodborne disease reported, 350 cases go unreported. The report states that there are 2.2 million cases of people made sick by contaminated food in Canada, with up to one billion dollars being spent on medical support, lost income and associated expenses. Considering these significant costs, food safety is worthy of everyone's attention, especially restaurant owners.

Does your food service establishment meet food and health safety standards?

According to food safety inspectors, a critical violation by a food service establishment means that there has been a violation that may result in food becoming contaminated. Critical violations are a benchmark for judging restaurant's cleanliness. According to research conducted by Dateline NBC (2004), a whopping 82% of the 1000 restaurants that they examined in the United States had at least one critical violation. They reported a 60% critical violation rate for fast food restaurant. Casual and family dining chains came out worse.

Don't wait for a food inspector to come knocking on your door in order to find out if your establishment meets food safety standards. A single case of food poisoning associated with your establishment can prove to be fatal. Recent surveys show that customers are increasingly paying attention to clues such as the cleanliness of bathrooms as an indication of the cleanliness of your restaurant's kitchen. Customers are quick to spot grimy countertops, dirty floors, bathrooms that have been mopped in a circle (you know the type: all the corners are black with gunk) and trash spilling out of the containers. It's a real turn-off. There is no doubt about it: the cleanliness of your establishment directly affects your bottom line.

By being proactive and investing in your establishment's food safety, not only are you ensuring that your customers are happy repeat customers, but you are going a long way in protecting the reputation of your business. Owen Chong, an Education Consultant with Food Safety Healthy Environment, stresses the critical role that restaurant owners play in food safety: "Restaurant owners NEED to be proactive and educate themselves about food safety. This encompasses learning about proper temperature control, cross contamination, and proper sanitization."

A simple sanitation program for your establishment

Keeping your restaurant clean is one of the most important steps in the prevention of foodborne illnesses. When it comes to finding the proper cleaning maintenance program for your business, look for a system that is simple and easy to use. With the quick personnel turnovers in the foodservice industry, as well as additional obstacles such as language barriers and literacy, it is critical that your employees be trained quickly and easily to properly use any cleaning system that you choose. With so many different surfaces to disinfect in a restaurant (i.e. counters, sinks, cutting boards, slicers, floors, tables, chairs, bathrooms, etc.) a line of cleaning products that is illustrated with pictograms and color-coded for different surfaces will help your employees quickly learn and provide them with a daily reminder of correct use. Wall charts can also be very effective. Seek a cleaning solution provider who offers training to your employees. This added benefit will provide you with the optimum use of the products purchased and allow you to focus your time and resources on other aspects of your business. A cleaning system that can be customized to fit your needs is ideal since it can go a long way in making your life simpler.

Avmor goes one step further by customizing its cleaning and sanitation program according to the specific needs and requirements of your food service chain or establishment. Effective and efficient in cleaning and sanitizing all areas, Avmor's Quick Stuff Customized Sanitation Program is safe and easy to use. Illustrated with pictograms and equipped with quick-reference wall-charts, the extensive line of Quick Stuff products was developed for use in the foodservice industry in order to cater to your specific needs.


A More Complete Clean

Avmor's system of color-coded bottles and dispensers ensures that your employees use each product on the proper surface. Furthermore, Avmor offers intensive in-house training to your employees in order to optimize usage of the products you purchase. In addition, all equipment, hardware and installation are supplied on a no charge basis. Avmor will even prepare a customized sanitation operations manual incorporating digital pictures of your foodservice facility.

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An effective and safer sanitation program

In order to further safeguard the health and safety of your employees, take the time to educate yourself and decide which sanitation program is right for you. Bleach is frequently used in cleaning and is a popular component in most cleaning products, although it has been proven to be harmful to the environment and to people. According to Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation, it is suspected of causing a number of environmental problems, such as ozone depletion, and of posing health threats to humans and wildlife, such as cancer. Commonly used in cleaning, disinfecting, and laundering, chlorine can fade and discolor fabrics, causing additional wear and tear on their lifespan. This entails additional expenses by requiring you to replace new uniforms more frequently. Also, bleach poses a danger to your employees by causing severe irritation to the eyes and skin if not rinsed thoroughly, resulting in dermatitis and rash. It can emit fumes that severely irritate and impair the respiratory tract, and when mixed with certain chemicals, has the potential to create noxious gases. Why use this chemical for cleaning and disinfecting your establishment when there are better and safer alternatives available?

A viable alternative to using bleach and chlorine products are Quaternary Ammonium Compounds (QUATS) sanitizers. They are non-staining, odorless, and non-corrosive to metals. As sanitizers they exhibit a wide latitude in germicidal activity when used in hard water and are effective over a wide pH range. QUATS leave a non-volatile residue on surfaces to which they are applied, rendering the surfaces bacteriastatic for a given time.¹ According to the Drugs Directorate, Quat Sanitizers should contain a minimum 450 ppm (parts per million) to be an effective disinfectant and a maximum 200 ppm (parts per million) for an effective rinse free sanitizer. Avmor's line of Quick Stuff products contains Quat Sanitizer. Sani Stuff RTU (ready-to-use) is a popular choice amongst users due to its convenience and effectiveness

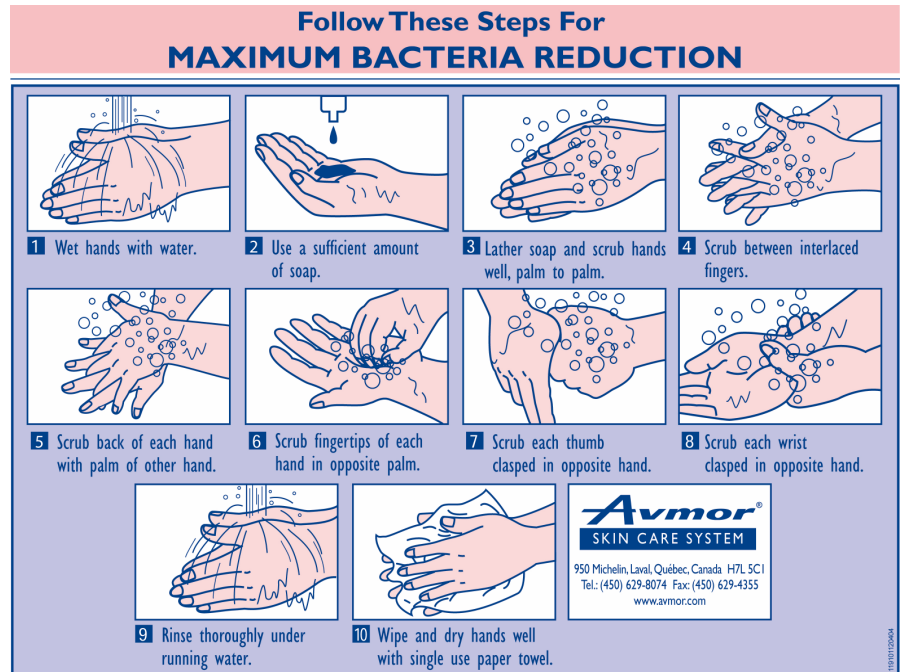
Additional Food Health and Safety Tips:

Experts all agree that the single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is to wash our hands.

- **Proper Handwashing** - Not only should surfaces be washed and disinfected frequently, so should hands! Remember when mom always reminded you to "Wash your Hands!"... She was right. Hands spread an estimated 80 percent of common infectious diseases. Proper hand washing, though simple, is often neglected. Experts all agree that the single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is to wash our hands.
- Not only is hand washing essential, but HOW you wash is key. Washing your hands does not mean turning on the tap and quickly running your fingers through cold water for a few seconds!



Below is a diagram demonstrating the proper technique:



- **Separate. Don't cross-contaminate.** Cross-contamination allows bacteria to spread from one food product to another. This is especially dangerous for raw meat, poultry and seafood. Keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods. Adding to the challenge, microorganisms continue to adapt and evolve, often increasing their degree of virulence.
 1. If possible, use one cutting board for raw meat products and another for salads and other foods that are ready to be eaten.
 2. Always wash cutting boards, knives and other utensils with hot soapy water after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry and seafood. Then sanitize.
 3. Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- **Temperature Control:** Cook food to proper temperatures. Bacteria multiply rapidly between 4.4° C (40° F) and 60° C (140° F). Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that causes foodborne illness. Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying. Public health officials recommend setting the refrigerator at 1.1° C (34° F) to 3.3° C (38° F) and the freezer unit at -17.7° C (0° F) and occasionally checking these temperatures with an appliance thermometer.

Sources

1. Choosing the Proper Sanitizer or Disinfectant, Nathan Schiff, Ph.D. <http://www.schiff-consulting.com/choosing.html> (1998)
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3. Partnership For Food Safety Education (2006). Foodborne Illness. A Constant Challenge <http://www.fightbac.org/content/view/154/86>
4. Partnership For Food Safety Education (2005). Fight BAC! Four Simple Steps to Food Safety. <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~dms/fsebac.html>
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