ServSafe Food Handler Test Pre

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Practice Questions

Try all 30 first, then check the answer key at the back.

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1. What does TCS stand for in food safety?

A. Taste, Color, and Smell
B. Temperature Controlled Storage
C. Total Contamination Sources
D. Time and Temperature Control for Safety

2. Which of the following is a common cause of foodborne illness?

A. Cooking food to order
B. Refrigerating hot foods immediately
C. Poor personal hygiene
D. Using food past its best-by date

3. What is the temperature danger zone where bacteria multiply rapidly?

A. 32°F–40°F (0°C–4°C)
B. 41°F–135°F (5°C–57°C)
C. 0°F–32°F (-18°C–0°C)
D. 135°F–165°F (57°C–74°C)

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4. Which of the following is considered a TCS food?

A. Raw eggs
B. Bread
C. Dry pasta
D. Unopened canned goods

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5. What type of microorganism causes the majority of foodborne illnesses?

A. Viruses
B. Parasites
C. Fungi
D. Bacteria

6. Which bacterial toxin cannot be destroyed by cooking?

A. E. coli toxin
B. Listeria monocytogenes toxin
C. Staphylococcus aureus toxin
D. Salmonella toxin

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7. Why are cut melons considered TCS foods while whole melons are not?

A. Cut melons are more acidic
B. Cutting exposes the flesh to contamination and provides nutrients for bacteria
C. Cut melons have a higher pH level
D. Whole melons don't contain bacteria

8. Which virus is most commonly associated with foodborne illness from shellfish?

A. Norovirus
B. Influenza
C. Rhinovirus
D. Rotavirus

9. At what temperature should cold TCS foods be held to prevent bacterial growth?

A. 50°F (10°C) or below
B. 60°F (15.5°C) or below
C. 45°F (7°C) or below
D. 41°F (5°C) or below

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10. Which of the following is NOT considered a major foodborne parasite?

A. Anisakis
B. Giardia
C. E. coli
D. Trichinella

11. What is the most effective way to control the growth of bacteria in food?

A. Increasing acidity
B. Controlling time and temperature
C. Adding preservatives
D. Freezing all foods

12. Which condition is necessary for bacteria to grow?

A. Moisture
B. Light
C. Salt
D. Vitamin C

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13. Which pathogen is most commonly associated with raw poultry?

A. Botulism
B. Hepatitis A
C. Clostridium perfringens
D. Salmonella

14. What is the minimum internal cooking temperature for ground beef?

A. 165°F (74°C) for 15 seconds
B. 135°F (57°C) for 15 seconds
C. 155°F (68°C) for 15 seconds
D. 145°F (63°C) for 15 seconds

15. Which of the following is an example of a food that is NOT considered a TCS food?

A. Tofu
B. Dry rice
C. Cooked rice
D. Sliced melons

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16. What is the most common symptom of foodborne illness?

A. Diarrhea
B. Rash
C. Cough
D. Headache

17. Which population group is most susceptible to serious complications from foodborne illness?

A. Teenagers
B. Middle-aged adults
C. Athletes
D. The elderly

18. What is the primary purpose of the FDA Food Code?

A. To establish nutritional standards
B. To control food imports and exports
C. To provide guidance on food safety practices to prevent foodborne illness
D. To regulate food pricing

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19. Which of the following foods is most likely to contain the parasite Anisakis?

A. Raw eggs
B. Raw fish
C. Raw chicken
D. Raw beef

20. What is the fastest way for bacteria to multiply?

A. Binary fission
B. Sporulation
C. Budding
D. Conjugation

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21. How long should food handlers wash their hands to ensure proper cleanliness?

A. At least 5 seconds
B. At least 10 seconds
C. At least 60 seconds
D. At least 20 seconds

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22. When should food handlers wash their hands?

A. Once every hour during a shift
B. Only after handling raw meat
C. Before starting work and after using the restroom
D. Only when hands look dirty

23. What symptom requires a food handler to be excluded from working?

A. Minor paper cut
B. Vomiting
C. Mild headache
D. Seasonal allergies

24. When should food handlers change their single-use gloves?

A. When they become soiled or torn, between tasks, after handling raw meat, and after 4 hours of continuous use
B. Only at the end of each shift
C. Only when visibly dirty
D. Only when changing food preparation areas

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25. What is the proper order for handwashing?

A. Soap, wet, scrub, dry, rinse
B. Scrub, wet, soap, rinse, dry
C. Wet, scrub, soap, rinse, dry
D. Wet, soap, scrub, rinse, dry

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26. Which of the following is NOT an acceptable hand drying method after washing?

A. Using an air dryer
B. Using a clean cloth designated for hand drying
C. Wiping hands on an apron
D. Using a single-use paper towel

27. Which symptom, if experienced by a food handler, requires reporting to the manager?

A. Minor muscle ache
B. Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
C. Mild cough
D. Slight fatigue

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28. What is the purpose of wearing gloves in food service?

A. To create a barrier between hands and food
B. To eliminate the need for handwashing
C. To protect hands from getting dirty
D. To keep hands warm during food preparation

29. Which of the following should food handlers do BEFORE putting on gloves?

A. Apply hand sanitizer only
B. Touch the inside of the gloves
C. Rinse hands with water only
D. Wash hands thoroughly

30. What should be done with a cut on a food handler's finger?

A. Ignore it if it's small
B. Cover it with just a bandage
C. Cover it with a clean bandage and a single-use glove
D. Apply ointment and continue working

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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. D — Time and Temperature Control for Safety
TCS stands for Time and Temperature Control for Safety, referring to foods that require time and temperature control to limit pathogen growth or toxin formation.

2. C — Poor personal hygiene
Poor personal hygiene, especially improper handwashing, is one of the most common causes of foodborne illness.

3. B — 41°F–135°F (5°C–57°C)
The danger zone is 41°F–135°F (5°C–57°C), where bacteria multiply most rapidly.

4. A — Raw eggs
Raw eggs require time and temperature control for safety as they can harbor bacteria like Salmonella.

5. D — Bacteria
Bacteria cause the majority of foodborne illnesses, though viruses, parasites, and fungi can also cause illness.

6. C — Staphylococcus aureus toxin
Staphylococcus aureus produces heat-stable toxins that remain dangerous even after cooking food to safe temperatures.

7. B — Cutting exposes the flesh to contamination and provides nutrients for bacteria
Cutting melons exposes the flesh to potential contamination and provides nutrients and moisture for bacterial growth.

8. A — Norovirus
Norovirus is the most common virus associated with foodborne illness from shellfish, especially raw or undercooked shellfish.

9. D — 41°F (5°C) or below
Cold TCS foods should be held at 41°F (5°C) or below to prevent bacterial growth.

10. C — E. coli
E. coli is a bacterium, not a parasite. Trichinella, Anisakis, and Giardia are all parasites that can cause foodborne illness.

11. B — Controlling time and temperature
Controlling time and temperature is the most effective way to control bacterial growth in food.

12. A — Moisture
Bacteria need food, acidity (pH), time, temperature, oxygen, and moisture to grow - often remembered by the acronym FAT TOM.

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13. D — Salmonella
Salmonella is most commonly associated with raw poultry and can cause severe foodborne illness.

14. C — 155°F (68°C) for 15 seconds
Ground beef should be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 155°F (68°C) for 15 seconds to ensure safety.

15. B — Dry rice
Dry rice is not a TCS food because it has low moisture content, which inhibits bacterial growth. However, cooked rice becomes a TCS food.

16. A — Diarrhea
Diarrhea is the most common symptom of foodborne illness, often accompanied by other symptoms like nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain.

17. D — The elderly
The elderly are among the most susceptible to serious complications from foodborne illness due to weakened immune systems.

18. C — To provide guidance on food safety practices to prevent foodborne illness
The primary purpose of the FDA Food Code is to provide guidance on food safety practices to prevent foodborne illness.

19. B — Raw fish
Raw fish, especially from saltwater, is most likely to contain the parasite Anisakis, which is why proper freezing before serving raw fish is critical.

20. A — Binary fission
Binary fission is the process by which bacteria reproduce, dividing into two identical cells. Under ideal conditions, this can happen every 20 minutes.

21. D — At least 20 seconds
The proper hand washing procedure requires at least 20 seconds of scrubbing with soap and warm water to effectively remove pathogens.

22. C — Before starting work and after using the restroom
Food handlers should wash their hands before starting work and after using the restroom to prevent contamination of food.

23. B — Vomiting
A food handler with vomiting must be excluded from the operation as this is a symptom that can spread foodborne illness.

24. A — When they become soiled or torn, between tasks, after handling raw meat, and after 4 hours of continuous use
Food handlers should change gloves when they become soiled or torn, between tasks, after handling raw meat, and after 4 hours of continuous use to prevent cross-contamination.

25. D — Wet, soap, scrub, rinse, dry
The proper handwashing procedure is: wet hands with warm water, apply soap, scrub for 20 seconds, rinse,

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and dry with a single-use paper towel or air dryer.

26. C — Wiping hands on an apron
Wiping hands on an apron is not an acceptable hand drying method as it can recontaminate clean hands. Single-use paper towels or air dryers are the proper methods.

27. B — Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes) must be reported to a manager as it can be a sign of Hepatitis A, which is transmissible through food.

28. A — To create a barrier between hands and food
Gloves create a barrier between hands and food to prevent bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods, reducing the risk of contamination.

29. D — Wash hands thoroughly
Food handlers must wash their hands before putting on gloves to prevent transferring contaminants to the gloves.

30. C — Cover it with a clean bandage and a single-use glove
Cuts must be covered with a clean bandage and then a single-use glove to prevent contamination of food.

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