

# AMY'S FOOD SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

February 2024



## UPCOMING SERVSAFE® CLASSES

February 27th – Louisville

March 12th – Louisville

March 26th – Louisville

April 8th – Louisville

April 23rd- Louisville

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

Chefs for Hope Dinner April  
11<sup>th</sup> 7:00 p.m.

Savor at River House

## AMY'S FOOD SAFETY SCOOP

In 2022 the FDA made updates to the 2017 Food code. This code is based on science and makes recommendations for food safety regulations. In October of 2023 the ServSafe® material was updated to reflect any changes and new recommendations. The NRA (National Restaurant Association) states that the most prominent overall theme in new food-industry regulation is increased and expanded regulatory oversight that works toward building a culture of food safety. Employees are more responsible for food safety protocols with management taking on more of a supervisory role. There is definitely more emphasis put on one important item, **Allergy Awareness**. New state laws are placing focus on properly training managers and employees in allergy awareness and reaction protocols. As all of you know, sesame was added to the allergen list in 2023, so now it is the Big 9 instead of the Big 8. According to the NRA, many states are now requiring food establishments to hang posters or signs that display the major food allergens, symptoms of an allergic reaction, and instructions of what to do during an allergic reaction. These include CT., Mass., MD., Mich., NY., RI., and VA. In some of those states, the restaurant is required to post a notice on the menu requesting the guest to inform their server of any food allergies before they place their order. Formal allergen training and certificates are not required in Kentucky, but a food establishment's person in charge is responsible for ensuring employees are properly trained in food safety, including food allergy awareness, as it relates to their assigned duties. Managers and owners can be ahead of the curve and make allergy awareness more of a focus in the training just in case some kind of requirement is mandated. The updated ServSafe® material does a nice job focusing on allergy awareness and steps that the front-of-the-house and the-back-of-the-house can take to prevent an allergic reaction. If you need an updated allergen poster, please let me know and I can provide one for you.



## Health Inspectors – Part II

Treating each day as an inspection day will help your restaurant be ready when the health inspector shows up. The inspector will be paying attention to all the following items.

Areas to focus on:

1. **Cross-contamination:** Foods can be contaminated when pathogens get transferred from one food or surface to another. Apart from improper storage when certain foods touch or drip on others, cross-contamination can also occur when food is mishandled during preparation or serving. To avoid cross-contamination: 1. Make sure all food handlers are trained and certified in food safety and allergen awareness. 2. Ensure all staff members follow good personal hygiene protocols. 3. Provide your kitchen staff with color-coded utensils and cutting boards. 4. Store chemicals in a designated area away from food. 5. Wash all fruits and vegetables before preparing and serving.
2. **Personal Hygiene:** Your team's good personal hygiene is critical for reducing the spread of pathogens and maintaining a safe restaurant, and inspectors will take notice. If employees don't follow handwashing guidelines, wear dirty clothes, or show up to work sick, your operation could be at risk. Hand washing is the most important part of a personal hygiene program. Employees should wash their hands after: 1. Using the restroom 2. Leaving and returning to the kitchen/prep areas. 3. Touching their face, hair, or clothing. 4. Eating, drinking, smoking, or chewing gum. 5. Clearing tables, busing dirty dishes, or taking out the trash. 6. Handling raw meat, poultry, or seafood. 7. Handling chemicals.

Back of the house staff should wear clean clothing every day, aprons, and gloves when necessary and hair coverings. They should also remove jewelry like rings or watches when they are working in food-prep areas. If team members show signs of illness, send them home.

**Poor personal hygiene is the number one cause of foodborne illness outbreaks in restaurants and retail food establishments. People contaminate food more than anything else.**



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Part III on health inspectors in next month's newsletter.....