



CITY OF  
TEA TREE GULLY  
*Naturally Better*

# CLEANING AND SANITISING FOOD CONTACT SURFACES

Effectively cleaning and sanitising food contact surfaces and equipment used to prepare food is critical for food safety.

Cleaning and sanitising is also a requirement of the Food Safety Standards Code (the Code). The sanitiser must be suitable for use on food contact surfaces. They generally have chlorine or quaternary ammonium compounds (QUATs) as active ingredients.

Cleaning and sanitising are generally separate processes. A surface must be thoroughly cleaned before it can be sanitised.

## WHAT IS CLEANING?

Cleaning is the process of using a detergent and water to remove residual food matter, dust, grease, dirt, stains and other visible material from all surfaces, fixtures, utensils and equipment.

## WHAT IS SANITISING?

Sanitising is the process of reducing the number of bacteria by using heat and/or chemicals. This process helps ensure that

the number of bacteria is reduced to a level that is safe for food contact and helps prevent food borne illnesses being passed on. The most commonly used methods to sanitise equipment are dishwashers and chemical sanitisers.

## DISHWASHER (HEAT)

Hot water must reach a minimum of 77°C for at least 30 seconds to be effective. For work health and safety reasons, heat should not be used to sanitise manually. A dishwasher is the only safe method for sanitising with heat.

## CHEMICAL SANITISERS

Food businesses must ensure that any chemical sanitiser used is 'food grade' as specified by labelling and material safety data sheets. It is important to always use these in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Some important information may not be available on the label, so refer to the

supplier or manufacturer for further information.

Steps to effectively clean and sanitise:

1. Pre-clean – remove dirt and other visible material from the surface. Remember to disassemble equipment before, if possible
2. Wash – use warm water and detergent. Soak if necessary to remove all visible residues
3. Rinse – rinse off detergent. If there is any remaining food or dirt, rewash or resoak
4. Sanitise – sanitise to reduce microorganisms to safe levels and leave for the correct contact time
5. Final rinse – rinse off sanitiser (if required by the instructions)
6. Dry – air dry, use a single use towel or clean tea towel.

### CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

	Yes / No
Are you sanitising all food contact surfaces?	
Are you using a dishwasher to sanitise food related equipment? If so, what is the temperature and length of the rinse cycle?	
Do you have a chemical food grade sanitiser? (required for bench tops and equipment that cannot go through the dishwasher)	
Do you know how to correctly dilute the sanitiser? Once diluted what is the shelf life?	
Sanitisers need time to work. Do you know the contact time for your sanitiser (e.g. 1–5 minutes)?	
Do you need to rinse the sanitiser?	
Are you using bleach? Is this unscented? Once diluted, what is the shelf life?	
Do you know how to correctly dilute bleach? Do you rinse off the bleach?	

Recommendation:

Write up a procedure for food handlers to follow. This may include:

- a. Providing a measuring cup indicating how much sanitiser to use (for spray bottles or sink)
- b. Putting a fill line on your sink to measure how much water to add.

Note: This information is designed to accompany fact sheets from SA Health and Food Standards Australia and New Zealand.