

RICE – HOW TO HANDLE IT SAFELY

The risks associated with the cooking and storage of rice

Rice can be contaminated by the spores from a type of harmful bacteria, *Bacillus cereus*, which can cause food poisoning. The spores can survive normal cooking and if the rice is not cooled quickly enough and/or stored incorrectly, rapid growth of the spores and toxin production will occur. The toxin produced is very heat resistant and therefore even thorough re-heating of the rice will not destroy the toxin and food poisoning could still occur.

SAFETY POINT	CONTROL MEASURES
Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always store the uncooked rice in suitable, dry, lidded, pest-proof containers.• Always clean up spillages, to prevent attracting pests.• Ensure good stock rotation – ‘first in first out’.
Preparation and cooking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thoroughly wash then rinse in cold water before use to remove husks, starch and other contaminants.• Remember spices can also be a source of contamination. Use reputable suppliers of spices and where possible add the spices using clean utensils/hands.• Never use the same container for cooked and uncooked rice.• Wherever possible, freshly cook the rice to order and serve straight away.• Remember not to contaminate the rice whilst it is cooking e.g. by touching, coughing, sneezing nearby or using dirty utensils, cloths or equipment.• Use clean utensils to break up clumping. Never use hands.• Check that rice and dishes containing rice are very hot (steaming to a minimum of 75°C) all the way through, with no cold spots.
Cooling and storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the rice is to be cooked in advance, do not cook too much at one time as large amounts take too long to cool and that allows food poisoning bacteria to multiply.• Rice which is not used immediately should be cooled to room temperature as quickly as possible. This should never take longer than 1 ½ hours and should preferably be much quicker. This can be achieved by cooking smaller amounts, spreading the cooked rice out into a clean shallow tray, placing the rice under cold running water, placing the rice container in cold water or ice, or in larger establishments using a blast chiller.• Do not leave rice to cool down in the rice cooker, steamer or pan.• Once cooled to room temperature, cover the rice and store in the refrigerator at 8°C or below (preferably below 5°C).

Reheating and hot holding

- Only reheat rice if it has previously been cooled down safely and kept in the fridge until needed.
- Only take enough rice portions from fridge as are required.
- Thoroughly re-heat the rice all the way through until steaming (to a minimum of 75°C). You could check this with a temperature probe. This applies to fried rice as well.
- If the rice is to be microwaved, ensure that the cooking time is sufficient for the portion size. (Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully).
- Do not reheat rice more than once.
- If keeping rice hot for a period of time make sure it is first cooked to 75°C or above then held above 63°C for the rest of the time. You can keep rice hot in a rice cooker if you leave it on.

Personal hygiene

- Always wash hands (with hot water and soap) when entering the kitchen and before handling any food.
- Staff who have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting should not return to work until they have had no symptoms for 48 hours.

Consider the risks of handling rice within your own business and ensure that they are adequately controlled. Record the controls you've put in place in your documented food safety management system, such as a Safer Food Better Business pack and make sure you train your staff in these methods.

Pages on rice safety can be downloaded from on the Food Standards Agency's website

www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/chi-rice-sfbb-0513.pdf.

For further advice or information please contact the Food Safety team on **01803 208025** or via the website at: forms.torbay.gov.uk/ContactFood



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