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# Food Safety

Poor food preparation, handling, or storage can quickly result in food being contaminated with germs, and may lead to illness if eaten. To prevent food from spreading illness, you can do some very simple things.

### When You Purchase Food

- Don't buy food in poor condition. Make sure that refrigerated food is cold to the touch, that frozen food is rock-solid, and canned goods are free of dents, cracks or bulging lids.
- Check the "use by," "sell by" or "expiration date" on foods before purchase.
- Be sure that the meats and poultry you purchase have been inspected and passed for wholesomeness by federal or state inspectors.
- Keep packages of raw meat separate from other foods, particularly foods that are eaten fresh.
- Use only pasteurized milks, milk products and fruit juices.
- Do not use home-canned foods.
- Shop for meat, fish, poultry and cold food last. Take foods straight home to the refrigerator; never leave food in a hot car.

### When You Store Food

- Store all perishable foods at temperatures that will prevent spoilage (refrigerator temperature, 40° F or lower, and freezer temperature, 0° F or lower.)
- Have a working thermometer to monitor the temperature in the refrigerator and freezer.
- Set up refrigerators so that there is enough shelf space to allow for air circulation around shelves and refrigerator walls. This will help maintain proper food temperatures.
- Always examine food when it arrives to make sure it is not spoiled, dirty or infested with insects.
- Store unrefrigerated foods in clean, rodent- and insect-proof covered metal, glass or hard plastic containers. (Large shortening cans available from bakeries are ideal for storing flour and other commodities.)
- Store containers of food above the floor (at least 6") on racks or other clean slotted surfaces that permit air circulation.
- Keep storerooms dry and free from leaky plumbing or drainage problems. Repair all holes and cracks in storerooms to prevent insect and rodent infestation.
- Keep storerooms cool (about 60° F) to increase the food's shelf life.
- Store all food items separately from non-food items.
- Use an inventory system: the first food stored is the first food used. This will ensure that stored food is rotated.
- Pay close attention to expiration dates, especially on foods that spoil easily (dairy products, mayonnaise).

### When You Prepare Food

Keep every thing clean by following these hygiene procedures:

- Wear clean clothes, maintain a high standard of personal cleanliness, and carry out strict hygiene procedures during working hours.
- Wash hands carefully and thoroughly before preparing and serving food.
- Keep hands clean while handling food, surfaces, dishes and utensils.
- Do not prepare or serve food while ill with a communicable disease.
- If possible, do not diaper children or assist with toileting when you are handling food.
- Wash all raw fruits and vegetables before use.
- Wash tops of cans before opening.
- Keep work surfaces, utensils, towels, dish cloths and appliances clean.

*Thaw frozen meat, poultry or fish in the refrigerator* or put quick-thaw foods in plastic bags under cold running water for immediate preparation.

- Do not thaw frozen foods by allowing them to stand at room temperature.
- Keep raw meat and poultry (and their juices) away from other food and preparation surfaces to avoid spreading bacteria in the kitchen.

*Cook thoroughly!* Use a meat thermometer to check internal temperatures to be sure food has been cooked evenly.

- Use a thermometer to check the cooked temperature of poultry, stuffing (cook in separate pan from poultry or meat) and pork/pork products (minimum of 165° F).
- Heat foods to 140° F.
- Never reuse a spoon for cooking that was used for tasting.
- Cut food into pieces smaller than 1/4 inch for infants and 1/2 inch for toddlers.
- Prepare these foods as quickly as possible once removed from a refrigerator, serve them immediately, and refrigerate leftovers immediately:
  - Meat salads, poultry salads, egg salads, seafood salads and potato salads
  - Cream-filled desserts or puddings
  - Other prepared foods containing milk, meat, poultry, fish and/or eggs

### **When You Serve the Food**

- Serve food promptly after preparation or cooking. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Serve food on a table that was cleaned and disinfected before use. Use clean or disposable plates, cups and utensils.
- Make sure that all children and adults wash their hands before serving and eating food.
- Do not allow children to share food or drinks.
- Do not serve food or drinks in dishes which might contain lead.

### **When You Handle the Leftovers**

- Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard. Prevent the growth of bacteria by keeping foods at temperatures lower than 40° F or higher than 140° F during transportation and while holding until served. Bacteria multiply most rapidly between 40° F and 140° F.
- Cover or completely wrap foods during transportation.
- Never reuse a spoon that has been used even once for tasting.
- Reserve food for second servings at safe temperatures in the kitchen.
- Leftover food from serving bowls on the table must be thrown away with these possible exceptions:
  - Raw fruits and vegetables that can be thoroughly washed
  - Packaged foods that do not spoil
- Place foods to be stored for reuse in shallow pans and refrigerate, or freeze immediately to rapidly bring temperature to 40° F or lower.
- Leftovers or prepared casseroles held in the refrigerator must be discarded after two days.
- Leftover foods should not be sent home with children or adults because of the hazards of bacterial growth during transport.
- Keep lunches brought from home in the refrigerator until lunchtime.

### **When You Clean and Care for Equipment**

*Provide easy-to-clean equipment and utensils.*

- Use food contact surfaces and utensils that are easy to clean, nontoxic, corrosion-resistant, and non-absorbent.
- Use disposable articles that are made of non-toxic materials. Do not reuse disposable articles.
- Install appliances so that they, and the areas around them, can be cleaned easily.
- Be sure food contact surfaces are free of cracks and crevices, pots and pans are free of pits and dents, and plates are free of chips and cracks. Cracks in any surface can hold germs.

## Handout #9.1

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### *Wash equipment frequently.*

- Clean range tops during food preparation as needed and on a daily basis.
- Clean ovens and overhead hoods at least weekly.
- Wash the inside and outside of refrigerators weekly with the bleach solution; defrost when ice is 1/4" thick.
- Wash tables with the bleach solution before and after each meal.

### *Air dry all food contact surfaces after cleansing and sanitizing. Do not use reusable wiping cloths.*

### *Make sure that food contact surfaces and utensils are kept clean.*

- Cloths used for wiping counters and tables should not be used for anything else.
- Scrape and presoak dishes, pots, pans and utensils if necessary, to remove food particles before washing.
- Wash highchair trays, bottles and nipples in a dishwasher, if available. If the trays do not fit in the dishwasher, wash in detergent, rinse, spray with bleach solution, and air dry.
- Use the proper concentration of suitable detergent for hand and machine dishwashing, according to package directions.

### **When You Are Hand Washing Dishes**

The best way to wash, rinse and disinfect dishes and eating utensils is to use a dishwasher. If a dishwasher is not available or cannot be installed, a three-compartment sink will be needed to wash, rinse and disinfect dishes. A two-compartment or one-compartment sink can be used by adding one or two dishpans, as needed. In addition, you will need a dishrack with a drainboard to allow dishes and utensils to air dry.

It is best to use running water to rinse, because if you use a dishpan for rinsing, the water in this pan will be contaminated after the first dish is rinsed.

### *To wash, rinse and disinfect dishes by hand:*

- Fill one sink compartment or dishpan with hot tap water and dishwashing detergent.
- Fill the second compartment or dishpan with hot water.
- Fill the third compartment or dishpan with hot tap water and 1 tablespoon of liquid chlorine bleach for each gallon of water.
- Scrape dishes and utensils, and dispose of excess food.
- Dip scraped dish or utensil in the first sink compartment and wash thoroughly.
- Rinse dish or utensil in the second dishpan of clear water.
- Dip dish or utensil in the third dishpan of water and bleach solution for at least one minute.
- Place the dish or utensil in the rack to air-dry.
- Pick up and touch clean spoons, knives and forks only by the handles, not by any part that will be in contact with food.
- Handle clean cups, glasses and bowls so that fingers and thumbs do not touch the inside or the lip.

*Food preparation and dishwashing sinks should only be used for these activities, and should not be used for routine hand washing or diaper-changing activities.*

**Note:** If you do not have adequate facilities for cleaning and sanitizing dishes and utensils, use only disposable items.



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# Food Safety

## Food-Borne Disease

Contaminated food products are linked with large number of illnesses and deaths in people of all ages. However, children and especially those with weak immune systems are particularly at risk of illness from lots of food-borne germs. To reduce the risk of infection and disease from eating contaminated food products, the American Academy of Pediatrics 'committee on Infectious Diseases recommends the following preventive measures:

**Unpasteurized milk and cheese.** Children should not drink unpasteurized milk or eat unpasteurized cheese. Pasteurization is a method of preserving food by heating it to a certain point which will kill off harmful organisms but will not harm the flavor or quality of the food. This technique is mostly used with milk, fruit juices, cheeses and egg products. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly endorses the use of pasteurized milk and recommends that parents and public health officials be fully informed of the important risks associated with consumption of unpasteurized milk.

**Eggs.** Children should not eat raw or undercooked eggs, unpasteurized powdered eggs or products containing raw eggs. Ingestion of raw or improperly cooked eggs can produce severe salmonella disease.

**Raw and undercooked meat.** Children should not eat raw or undercooked meat or meat products, as they have been associated with disease. Knives, cutting boards, utensils, and plates used for raw meats should not be used for preparation of any food until the utensils have been cleaned properly. Do not place cooked or barbecued meat back onto the plate that held the raw meat.

**Unpasteurized juices.** Children should only drink pasteurized juice products unless the fruit is washed and freshly squeezed (i.e., orange juice) immediately before consumption. Consumption of packaged fruit and vegetable juices that have not undergone pasteurization or a comparable treatment has been associated with foodborne illness due to *E. coli* O157:H7 and salmonella species.

**Alfalfa sprouts.** The FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have reaffirmed health advisories that persons who are at high risk for severe foodborne disease, including children, persons with compromised immune systems and elderly persons, should avoid eating raw alfalfa sprouts until intervention methods are implemented to improve the safety of these products.

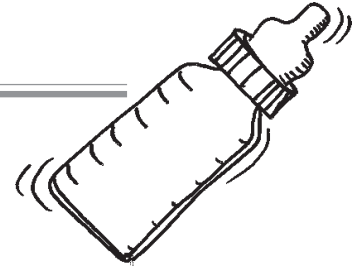
**Fresh fruits and vegetables.** Many fresh fruits and vegetables have been associated with disease because of contamination. All fruits and vegetables should be cleaned before eating. Knives, cutting boards, utensils, and plates used for raw meats should not be used for preparation of fresh fruits or vegetables until the utensils have been cleaned properly.

**Raw shellfish and fish.** Many experts recommend that children should not eat raw shellfish, especially raw oysters. Some experts caution against children eating raw fish. Raw shellfish, including mussels, clams, oysters, scallops and other mollusks, have been associated with many germs and toxins.

**Honey.** Children younger than one year of age should not be given honey unless the product has been certified to be free of *Clostridium botulinum* spores.



# Infant Feeding



## General Guidelines

Feeding infants takes some extra care and preparation. Always wash your hands and utensils before handling breast milk, infant formulas and foods. Be sure to follow directions on packages regarding expiration dates and preparations.

## Breast Milk

Breastfeeding provides numerous health benefits to young infants, including protection against infectious diseases caused by bacteria, viruses and parasites. It is an ideal source of infant nutrition, largely uncontaminated by environmental pathogens, and reduces some of the risks that are greater for infants in group care such as diarrhea, lower respiratory disease, otitis media, and SIDS. Breast milk is the best food to meet the nutritional needs of an infant from birth until 4 to 6 months of age.

The clear advantage of breast milk over any formula requires child care providers to promote breastfeeding for working mothers who are willing to nurse their babies and pump and supply their milk to child care facilities. Like formula, it is important to store breast milk carefully so it does not spoil.

The following are guidelines for storing breast milk:

- Breast milk should be in a ready-to-feed bottle to avoid exposure and spills.
- Label bottles of breast milk brought to the center with the child's name and date, if your facility is caring for more than one bottle-fed infant.
- Promptly refrigerate.
- Use breast milk on the day it is brought into the program.
- Throw away all milk not used within twelve hours.
- Never give breast milk intended for one child to another.

Breast milk may appear thinner, paler or even bluish in color compared to formula. This is normal. If it has been stored properly, it is completely safe and very nutritious for the infant.

Do not store defrosted breast milk for longer than 12 hours. **Do not refreeze** previously frozen breast milk.

**If expressed human milk is given to another child:** Breast milk from a mother is specific to her own child and should be used only with the intended child. Risk of HIV transmission from breast milk that another child has drunk is believed to be low. However, if one child is mistakenly fed another child's bottle, or one child fed from a bottle that another child has dropped or put down, this should be seen as an accidental exposure to a potential HIV-contaminating body fluid. In such cases providers should:

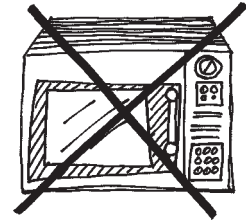
- a. Inform the parents of the child who was given the wrong bottle and notify the child's health care provider of the exposure.
- b. Inform the mother who supplied the breast milk and ask if she has ever had an HIV test and, if so, would she be willing to share the results with the parents of the exposed child.

### Formula

It is important for the infant's health that formula be prepared correctly and stored safely. Spoiled formula can make infants very sick. Germs can get into formula bottles from:

- The hands, nose or throat of the person preparing the bottle
- The counter or work area
- A bottle that was not well cleaned
- Unclean water used to make the formula
- Formula stored too long
- A bottle left at room temperature

Concentrated and powdered infant formula should be sent from the child's home in its original factory-sealed container and prepared according to package directions. To prevent illness from shared bottles or giving incorrect formula, label each child's bottles and formula with the child's name and the date the formula was prepared. Refrigerate the bottles as soon as they arrive or are made, and discard formula after 12 hours.



*Do not warm infant formula or breast milk in a microwave oven.*