

Safe Food Handling Practices for School Nutrition Programs





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Safe Food Handling Practices for School Nutrition Programs

Public Health Inspectors will work with School Nutrition Programs to ensure that:

- Food is prepared, stored and served in a manner consistent with accepted public health practices in order to reduce the incidence of food-borne illness.
 - Routine food premise inspections are conducted.
 - Food handler education is provided to teach proper food handling techniques, thus preventing or reducing the occurrence of food-borne illness in the community.
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Tips for Safe Food Handling at School Nutrition Programs

Foodborne illnesses are always a possibility when food is served. Listed here are tips that will help greatly reduce the risk of food-borne illnesses.

Avoid Contamination

Before you begin to prepare food you must be sure that all food contact surfaces – equipment, counters and other cooking areas – are clean and free from dirt and harmful bacteria.

- Wash hands with soap and warm water before starting work (for a minimum of 20 seconds), after using the toilet, sneezing or coughing, blowing your nose, after eating, drinking, or smoking, after handling money, or after any other chance of contamination. Hand sanitizers are not a substitute for hand washing.
- Use a paper towel to dry hands after washing. Do not use a cloth towel or apron.
- If you use gloves, be sure to use them properly. Remember that gloves are like a second skin. Every time you touch something while wearing gloves you pick up bacteria. Wash your hands before you put on clean gloves. Change your gloves as often as you would wash your hands. Do not wash the gloves you are wearing and continue to use them.
- Avoid serving food with fingers. Use tools such as tongs, ladles, lifters and scoops whenever possible.
- Do not dip fingers into food or lick fingers when preparing food. Do not reuse a spoon for tasting.
- Do not touch your hair, face or other parts of the



body with your hands and then touch food. Suitably confine hair while on duty (i.e. hats or hair-nets) to keep hair from falling into food.

- Do not assist with food preparation or serving when ill.
- Use clean utensils and dishes for mixing and serving cooked food.
- Food should be prepared in an area where people have easy access to wash their hands.
- Portioning and delivery of food to classrooms should be done in a manner so as to prevent contamination of the food. Remember to keep food covered, and handle ready-to-eat food with gloves or utensils.
- Foods available for self-serve should be covered or individually wrapped. It is recommended that students use tongs to pick-up the food (e.g. muffins).



Prevent Foodborne Illnesses

- Foods served for nutrition programs must originate from approved and inspected sources. Food that has been prepared or handled in a private home is not to be served as part of a nutrition program.
- Preparation of full meals and potentially hazardous foods require a fully equipped food preparation area.
- Store all potentially hazardous foods (i.e. eggs, cut/sliced fruit and vegetables, dairy products) in a refrigerator.
- When purchasing perishable foods, pay attention to “best before” and “expiration” dates, and spoilage times. Remember that once opened, some foods can spoil quickly regardless of the best before date (i.e. milk or yogurt). Follow the “first in, first out” rule.
- Frozen foods should be thawed in the refrigerator or under cold running water. Microwaves can be used for thawing smaller items.
- Cook eggs thoroughly to at least 66°C (145°F) and egg-based foods to at least 74°C (165°F) to ensure they are safe to eat.
- Choose only refrigerated Grade A or AA eggs. Ungraded, or “farm-gate” eggs may be contaminated with salmonella or other microorganisms, which can cause illness.
- Food should be prepared as close to serving time as possible. If not serving immediately, store either below 4°C (40°F) or above 60°C (140°F). Do not allow prepared foods to sit at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize all work surfaces (i.e. chopping boards and counters) before and after each use. Wash, then sanitize by wiping down food contact surfaces with a solution of 5 ml (1 tsp) bleach to 1L (4 cups) water, or another approved sanitizer. The cloth used should be immersed in sanitizer solution when not in use, and the sanitizer solution should be remade when it becomes cloudy.
- When air-drying cups, bowls or other dishes after washing, ensure they are upside down and on a rack or other surface that allows air to circulate underneath them.
- If transporting foods from the preparation area to the classrooms, use a clean cart, trolley, or plastic bins.

Storage and Pest Control

- When buying foods that are normally stored at room temperature, such as crackers or cereals, transfer immediately to insect and rodent-proof containers with tight-fitting lids, such as Tupperware or

food-grade plastic containers.

- Food should be stored at least 15 cm (6") off the floor or in a cupboard. Do not store food on the floor.
- Keep storage areas dry, well ventilated, lighted and thoroughly clean.
- Rotate food in order of purchase - first in, first out.
- Store cleaning products, disinfecting agents, insecticides, mops and brooms separately from food.
- Keep all utensils and dishes in enclosed cupboards. Store glasses and cups upside down on a clean surface.
- Plastic storage bins or trays for transporting and serving food are to be cleaned and sanitized after each use. Stainless steel is also suitable. Aluminum trays are not suitable, as they degrade with repeated washing and sanitizing.
- Regularly monitor refrigerator and freezer temperatures. The temperature of a refrigerator should be

less than 4°C (40°F) and the temperature of a freezer should be less than -18°C (0°F). Have equipment repaired immediately or report any problems to the appropriate staff immediately for their attention.

- Store garbage in a separate area from food-service area. Remove garbage daily.
- Attend to presence of insects or rodents immediately.

Food safety requirements differ, depending on the types of food being served at your school nutrition program, and the way they are prepared/served. Refer to the following chart to determine the food safety requirements for your program.

Type of food service	Requirements
Only pre-packaged, non-hazardous foods	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All foods individually portion packaged (i.e. granola bars, yogurt, fruit cups) • All drinks served in original single-portion containers (i.e. tetra-paks, milk cartons) • Whole fruits and vegetables (not sliced or cut). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All utensils used (plates, spoons, forks, knives) must be disposable • Wash sink required to wash fruits and vegetables • No hand-washing facilities required in the food preparation area
Low-risk foods	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-hazardous baked products purchased from an approved source (e.g. bagels, English muffins) • Frozen, heat-and-serve products • Fruits and vegetables cut up on-site • Utensils and equipment used are limited to cutting boards, multi-use articles such as knives for cutting fruits and vegetables, or serving utensils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand-washing basin in the food preparation area, fully plumbed with hot and cold running water and drained, with soap and hand towels in dispensers • Separate on-site two-compartment sink or a one-compartment sink used in conjunction with a portable basin used solely as the sanitizing rinse compartment for multi-use utensils • A single utility sink may be used as a hand-washing basin during food preparation and for utensil cleaning after all food preparation has been completed • All utensils used for eating and drinking (plates, spoons, forks, cups) must be disposable
High-risk foods	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazardous foods such as eggs, cheese, hummus, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand-washing basin in the food preparation area, fully plumbed with hot and cold running water and drained, with soap and hand towels in dispensers • Separate three-compartment sink or commercial dishwasher where multi-service eating and drinking utensils are being used or Separate two-compartment sink where disposable eating and drinking utensils are being used

Hand Washing Facilities

A separate hand washing basin, fully plumbed with hot and cold running water and drained, with liquid soap and paper towels in dispensers are required in any area where food is prepared, handled or processed.

If there is no hand washing basin available, all food and drinks served must be non-hazardous, and individually portion packaged i.e. fruit cups, yogurt, pre-packaged Rice Krispy squares, tetra-paks, pre-packaged cereals and whole fruits.

It is strongly recommended that waterless hand sanitizer be made available to the students for use prior to eating.



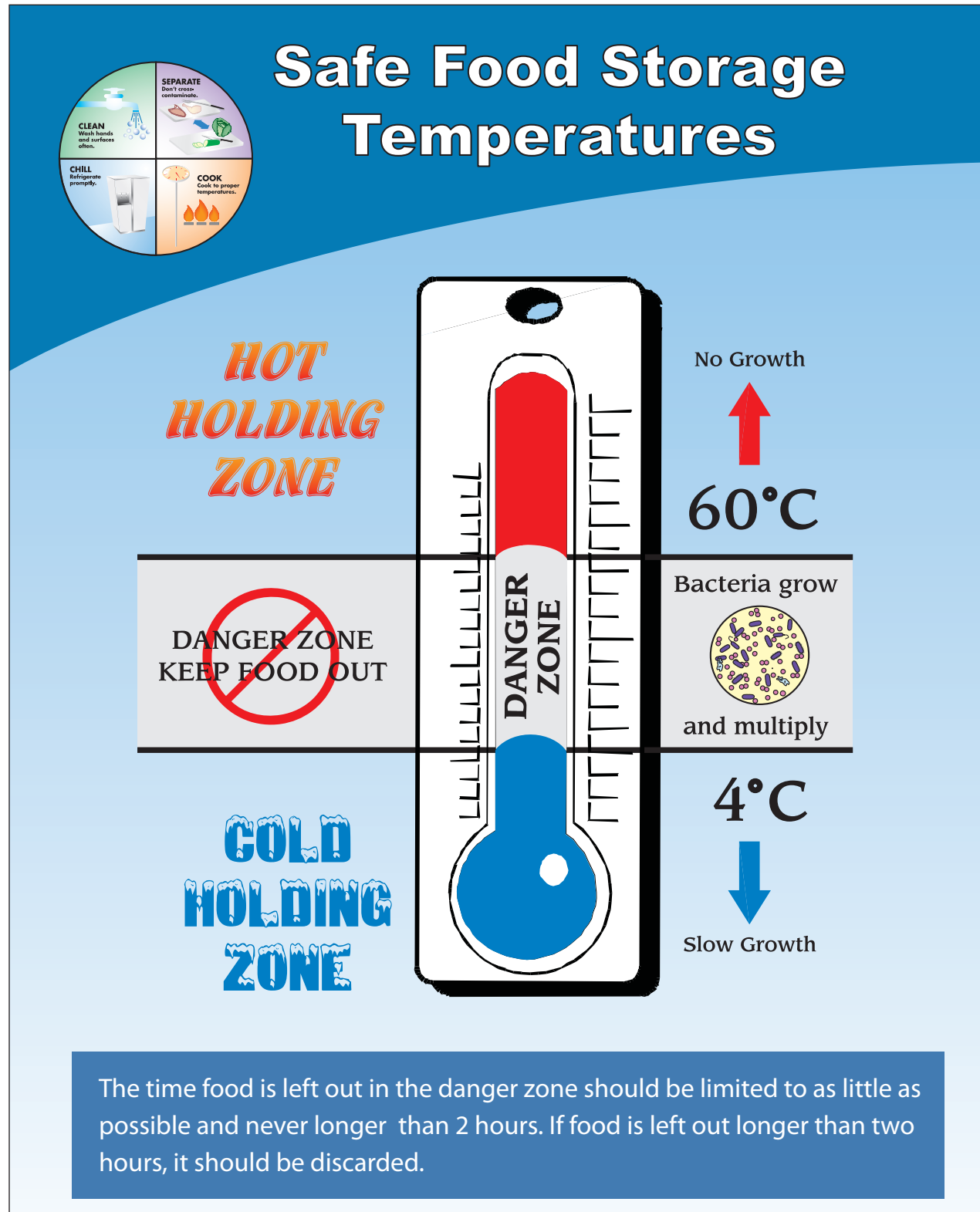
Dishwashing

- A two-compartment sink must be available where multi-use utensils are used for food preparation and disposable eating and drinking utensils are used. **WASH** and **RINSE** in the first sink with tap water and **SANITIZE** in the second sink. Approved sanitizers are chlorine bleach, iodine and quaternary ammonium.
- A one-compartment sink used in conjunction with a portable basin, used solely as the sanitizing rinse compartment for sanitizing multi-use utensils is permissible.
- A three-compartment sink where the wash-rinse-sanitize method is utilized must be available to manually wash multi-service eating utensils.
- Mechanical dishwashers must be commercial-type and equipped with temperature gauges.
- For premises where facilities for utensil and/or dish washing are not available, all food and drinks must be prepared and served using disposable, single service articles.
- Clean all countertops, food preparation surfaces, equipment and serving bins with hot soapy water, then sanitize after every use.

To make a sanitizing solution: Pour one tablespoon (15 mL) of household bleach into one gallon (3.78 L) of warm water. For iodine and quaternary ammonium, follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to create a sanitizing solution.

Refrigeration

- Refrigeration facilities must be adequate in size and maintained at the appropriate temperature (fridge at 4°C/40°F or lower and freezer at -18°C/0°F or lower).
- Each refrigerated compartment must be equipped with an accurate indicating thermometer which can be easily read.



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