

Chapter 7

Food safety

Introduction

The food you serve the children in your care should be safe to eat. All food must be stored and prepared in a manner to prevent the spread of food-borne illness and reduce the risk of food allergies.

You and your staff must practice good hygiene when preparing and serving food. Ensure that food is stored correctly and cooked properly. Ensure that all staff are trained in proper food handling practices. Contact your district Public Health Inspector for information on PROTON, our food handler certification program.

Make safe food a top priority in your centre.

This chapter contains information on the following topics:

- Time and temperature control
- Cross-contamination
- Preventing food-borne illness
- Rodent and insect control
- Allergy prevention
- Food service tips
- Glove use for the food handler

Tips for success

- Keep hot food at 60 °C (140 °F) or higher and cold food at 4 °C (40 °F) or lower
- Ensure all hazardous food products are safe for consumption, an accurate probe thermometer must be used to measure the internal temperature
- Make sure that there is no cross-contamination from raw to cooked food in your refrigerator, on your counter or with your utensils
- Wash your hands properly and frequently. Refer to the section on *Handwashing* in Chapter 2.
- Protect food from flies, cockroaches, rats and other vermin

For more information please call York Region *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653 and speak to a public health inspector

Time and temperature control

Approximately 80% of all food-borne illnesses are the result of time and temperature abuse.

Examples of time and temperature control problems may include the following:

- Improper internal temperature of food when delivered (a very important step to monitor when food is catered to your centre)
- Improper thawing
- Preparation of food items at room temperature for extended periods of time
- Inadequate cooking or heat processing
- Inadequate hot holding
- Inadequate cooling
- Inadequate reheating

Food products which can support bacterial growth such as meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, gravies and custards must not be left in the **Danger Zone** except during cooking or heat processing. Refer to Appendix 7 for Food safety/temperature resources.

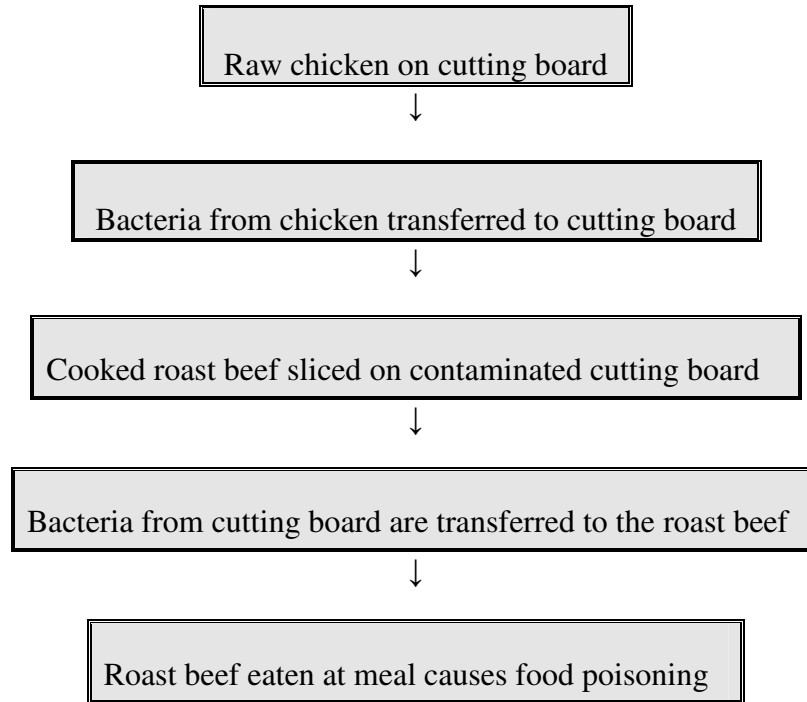
The **Danger Zone** is the range of temperatures where the bacteria present in the food will multiply rapidly. This temperature range is 4 °C to 60 °C (40 °F to 140 °F).

If your centre is serving food from a catering service, ensure that the food is received either 4 °C (40 °F) or lower for cold food, or 60 °C (140 °F) or higher for hot food and stays at this temperature until it is served. Check the temperature with an accurate probe thermometer and record it in a log book. Disinfect the thermometer prior to each use. Refer to the section on *Keeping your centre clean* in Chapter 2. Make sure that your caterer is reputable and inspected by the Health Department in which they are located. If you change caterers or your food preparation method, notify your area public health inspector immediately.

Cross-contamination

Quite often food items which are generally safe become contaminated because they have come in contact with a surface, utensil, hand or piece of equipment which is contaminated. This is an indirect contamination known as cross-contamination.

Note the following:



Some examples of surfaces, utensils and equipment which may cause cross-contamination are:

- Cutting boards
- Slicers
- Mixers
- Grinders
- Knives
- Tongs
- General serving utensils
- Food preparation tables
- Testing thermometer

Cross-contamination can be eliminated by using separate utensils and cutting boards for raw foods and cooked food items. All utensils, equipment and food contact surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected after every use. Refer to the section on *Keeping your centre clean* in Chapter 2.

Preventing food-borne illness through proper handwashing

One of the most important things you can do to prevent food-borne illness is to keep hands clean.

Wash your hands:

- When you arrive at work
- Before preparing, serving or eating food items, and particularly after handling raw meats, poultry and raw vegetables
- After handling dirty dishes
- After you have been to the washroom
- After sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose
- After mopping the floor or any other cleaning duty
- After handling chemicals
- After handling any animals

When preparing and serving food, other measures to help prevent food-borne illness include:

- Using proper utensils instead of your hands. **Do not use gloves in place of using proper utensils.**
- Keeping your fingernails short and free from polish. Use a nailbrush to remove any microorganisms under the nails. Do not share nailbrushes,
- Removing jewelry from your hands and wrists. Jewelry can trap dirt and pathogens. You may unknowingly lose a piece of the jewelry in the food.
- Wiping your hands with disposable paper towels. Wiping your hands on a cloth or on your clothing can transfer dirt and bacteria back onto your hands

For more information, refer to the section on *Handwashing* in Chapter 2.

Rodent and insect control

Proper food storage practices and garbage handling will prevent rodent and insect infestations.

- Clean all food spills immediately
- Screen all doors and windows in your child care centre. Maintain in good repair.
- Rotate food stock regularly to prevent insect infestations from old grain products
- Store food products in insect and rodent-proof containers
- Should you discover rodent droppings in food **do not** simply remove the droppings and use remainder of the product. The food item must be discarded.
- If an infestation occurs, hire a licensed pest control operator to eliminate the problem. Arrange for the pest control service at a time when children are not present. Refer to the section on *Pesticides* in Chapter 4.
- If you find rodent droppings or signs of an infestation, clean and thoroughly disinfect the area. Refer to the section on *Keeping your centre clean* in Chapter 2.

Food safety for allergy prevention

- An allergy risk list with the child's name and allergy-producing food items needs to be:
 - Dated
 - Current
 - Available to all staff for routine review
- When in doubt about a food, do not serve it to a child with allergies
- Obtain as much detail from the parent(s) regarding the food items causing allergies and the child's reaction to them. Arrange for parent(s) to provide their own substitute food when it is the safest alternative.
- To reduce the risk of a child having an allergic reaction to a food it is recommended that the child care centre provides all food, including birthday cakes and special occasion food items
- Written and detailed recipes listing all the ingredients will prevent giving a child a food which may cause an adverse reaction. At times, simple substitutions can be made so that a separate portion can be prepared for a child with allergies.
- Do not reuse a dish that has not been properly cleaned and sanitized. Traces of the food, such as tomato, corn or egg, may be left behind and could seriously harm a child who is allergic to them.
- When serving substitute food to a child with an allergy, use different utensils than those used to serve the regular food. Thoroughly clean and sanitize utensils after each use.
- Ensure that children do not share their food with each other
- If a child is sick after eating, detailed information describing what they ate and drank and the symptoms, such as vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, or a respiratory problem can help diagnose an allergy
- Do not use latex gloves in the child care centre, due to potential allergic reactions
- If after discussions with parents you have any concerns about their instructions, you can consult with the Health Protection Division staff of the York Region *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653

Food service tips

Many disease causing micro-organisms can be spread through food. The following tips will help ensure that the food served at your centre is safe and will not cause food-borne illness.

- Children and staff must wash their hands before eating. If the meal is interrupted (e.g., helping a child in the bathroom or wiping a runny nose), wash hands again before eating. Refer to the section on *Preventing food-borne illness through proper handwashing* in this chapter.
- Ensure that no one with symptoms of illness is responsible for food preparation
- Food handlers must properly wash their hands at the handwash basin in the food preparation area before handling any food
- All food handlers must wear an appropriate hair restraint (e.g., hair net)
- The food preparation must take place in the designated food preparation area (e.g., kitchen) and not in the classroom.
- The food preparation area must be separated by a door or gate from areas where the children play
- Do not serve unpasteurized milk or milk products
- Do not serve ungraded, cracked or grade C eggs
- Ensure that all raw fruits and vegetables are thoroughly washed before serving to children
- Ensure that children do not share their food, utensils, cups or drinking bottles. This will help to reduce the risk of spreading germs from person to person.
- Ensure that all refrigeration units are equipped with accurate indicating thermometers
- Ensure that all infant bottles are kept refrigerated and are properly labeled with the child's name
- Ensure that new formula is made fresh daily. Any leftover formula or breastmilk provided by the parent should be discarded. Ensure the parents are informed of how much the child has consumed.
- Ensure that food products do not touch the table directly. Protect food products by serving them on a disposable sanitary article (e.g., paper plate), or on a plate that can be properly cleaned and sanitized.

- Do not touch the working end of cutlery and only use the handle to pick it up
- Handle clean cups, bowls and glasses so fingers and thumbs do not touch the inside or the lip
- Food items served to children at the centre must be from an approved source. An approved source is a food premise that is inspected by the appropriate federal, provincial or municipal inspection agency. For example, supermarkets or bakeries are approved sources. For this reason food that is made in the home of a parent or staff is not from an approved source, and is not to be served to the children. An exception is made for food provided by a parent for his or her own child. Refer to *Appendix 7 Food from an approved source* for more information.
- Records must be maintained for all food products that are purchased and or brought in from an approved source. Ensure you record who brought in the food, to whom the food was served, the date when the food was brought in and where the food was purchased. These records are necessary to aid in an investigation, should a food-borne illness occur.
- It is strongly recommended that persons responsible for food preparation have training in safe food handling. York Region Community and Health Services Department, Health Protection Division offers PROTON, a certificate course on safe food handling. To contact your public health inspector for additional information on the program, including course dates call York Region *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653.

Glove use for the food handler

When worn appropriately, gloves can act as a barrier for disease and bacteria transmission. If you have any cuts, burns, open sores, or skin diseases on your hands, report it to your supervisor immediately. You are required to wear gloves if handling food. Gloves must be changed frequently and between tasks.

Protect the food by wearing disposable, water-tight gloves. The recommended disposable gloves for use are:

- Neoprene
- Nitrile
- Polyethylene
- Vinyl

Latex gloves can cause severe allergic reactions and are not recommended for use in a child care setting.

Wearing gloves does not eliminate the need to properly wash your hands. For more information on how and when to wash your hands, refer to Appendix 2 Correct handwashing procedures.