

GRAB AND GO LESSON

Personal Hygiene for the Child Care Kitchen

Topic Area: Health and Safety
Subtopic Area: Nutrition Education

Objective: Recall at least three good personal hygiene practices to implement in the child care kitchen.

Practicing good personal hygiene is important when working in a child care kitchen. Not only does it help children to receive safe meals, but it also helps to keep those working in the kitchen safe.

The first step to good personal hygiene is to report to work in good health, clean, and dressed in clean clothing. If you are sick, avoid preparing food to reduce the risk of spreading illness. Whether wearing uniforms or other clothes, be sure that it is free from strings, sequins, beads, or other items that can fall into the food. Wear close-fitting clothing to prevent hazard.

When preparing foods, wear a clean apron to reduce the risk of transferring germs from clothing to food. It should be changed whenever it becomes soiled. It is important to only wear aprons while in the kitchen.

When working in the kitchen, appropriate footwear is important. Shoes should be made of leather or a leather-like material and have a rubber sole to prevent slipping on wet or greasy floors. Avoid open-toe shoes, or shoes with heels to prevent injury while preparing meals.

Jewelry can be a safety hazard when preparing food. Limit jewelry to a plain wedding band.

Keep hair clean and wear suitable hair restraints. Hair contains bacteria and can contaminate the food. To prevent the spread of bacteria, always pull all hair back and cover with a hairnet or hat when in the kitchen. For men with facial hair, cover with a beard net.

Fingernails should be short, filed, and clean. Fingernail polish is not recommended as it may chip and fall into the food. It also makes it more difficult to see if there is any dirt under the nails. If you do wear nail polish, wear single-use gloves while preparing and serving foods. Always treat and bandage wounds and sores immediately. When your hand or finger is bandaged, wear a single-use glove.

Eat, drink, use tobacco, or chew gum only in designated areas where food or food contact surfaces may not become contaminated. Taste foods the correct way:

- Place a small amount of food into a separate container.
- Step away from the exposed food and food contact surfaces.
- Use a teaspoon to taste the food. Remove the used teaspoon and container, place it in the dish sink or throw away if using a disposable spoon.



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- Wash hands immediately after tasting the food.
Washing your hands is the best means of keeping food safe. Wash with soap and warm water. Scrub your hands for 20 seconds, then rinse and dry with a clean single-use towel. Use the towel to turn off the water and then throw it in the trash. Wash your hands before starting work, when switching tasks, after handling raw meat or before handling fresh produce or other ready to eat foods. Wash hands after going to the bathroom, coughing, sneezing, or handling garbage.

By following good personal hygiene practices, you should be able to serve food safely in your child care kitchen. For additional information, refer to the *Food Safety in Child Care* course at theinc.org.

References:

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2014). *Employee health and personal hygiene for child care center staff*. Author: University, MS
United States Department of Agriculture. (2013). *Nutrition and wellness tips for young children: Provider handbook for the child and adult care food program practice the basics of food safety to prevent foodborne illness*. Retrieved from www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html

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