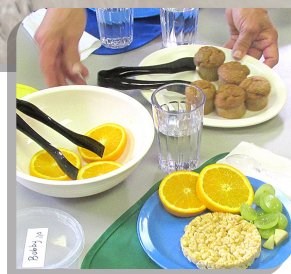


Employee Health *and* Personal Hygiene

for CHILD CARE CENTER STAFF



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Institute of Child Nutrition

The University of Mississippi

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PURPOSE

Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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Employee Health and Personal Hygiene for Child Care Center Staff

Introduction

Child care center employees who are sick can transmit their illness to children and others by contaminating food they prepare or serve. This guide highlights three best practices that child care center employees can use to prevent spreading foodborne illnesses.

1. Employee health
2. Handwashing
3. Eliminating bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods

Employee Health

What is a foodborne illness?

A foodborne illness results from consuming foods or liquids that are contaminated.

What is a foodborne illness outbreak?

A foodborne illness outbreak is when two or more cases occur of a similar illness resulting from consuming a common food or drink.

Do child care center employees have a responsibility to prevent foodborne illness?

Yes, all child care center employees who handle food share the responsibility for preventing foodborne illness.



What symptoms of illness should child care center employees who handle food report to the director?

The following symptoms or conditions should be reported:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Sore throat with a fever
- Jaundice (eyes or skin turns yellow)
- Infected wounds or lesions on hands, wrists, or exposed body parts
- Diagnosis of a foodborne illness
- Exposure to a foodborne illness

What diagnosed illnesses should a child care center employee report to the director?

Employees should always inform the director when they have one of the six reportable foodborne illnesses.

- Norovirus
- Hepatitis A virus
- Shigellosis (*Shigella* spp.)
- *E. coli* infection (mostly caused by Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC))
- Typhoid fever (caused by *Salmonella* Typhi)
- Salmonellosis (*Salmonella*, nontyphoidal)

What will happen if a child care employee has any of these symptoms?

The director will decide if an employee can stay at work and avoid food preparation, or if they need to go home to avoid contact with children and/or staff.



Handwashing

What is proper handwashing?

Proper handwashing is cleaning hands and exposed arms by applying soap and warm water, rubbing them together vigorously, rinsing them with clean water, and drying them thoroughly. Handwashing is important to get rid of dirt and reduce germs that can cause illness. The following steps are required for proper handwashing:

1. Wet hands with clean, running water and apply soap.
2. Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub them well. Scrub the backs of hands, between fingers, and under nails.
3. Continue rubbing hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse hands thoroughly under running water.
5. Dry hands using a paper towel or air-dry them.
6. Avoid re-contaminating hands when turning the water off and discarding paper towels. Turn the water off using a paper towel, or a similar barrier. Trashcans with foot-pedal operated lids are preferable.

When assisting a child in handwashing, either hold the child (if an infant) or have the child stand on a safety step at a height at which the child’s hands can hang freely under the running water. Assist the child in performing all of the above steps, and then wash your own hands.

Why is handwashing important?

Proper handwashing helps to prevent foodborne illness. Handwashing is critical to prevent the transmission of pathogens (germs) that cause illness. A child care center employee can transfer germs from hands to food or food contact surfaces. Children that subsequently eat contaminated food may become sick.



When should child care center employees wash their hands?

Hands should be washed immediately:

- When arriving for the day
- When moving from one assigned task to another
- When entering a food preparation area
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before serving food
- Before putting on new, single-use gloves, and between glove changes
- Before handling clean dishes or utensils
- When changing food preparation tasks, such as between working with ready-to-eat and raw foods
- After handling soiled dishes or utensils
- After touching bare, unclean body parts
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats, including visits to petting zoos
- After touching garbage
- When leaving for the day

Can hand sanitizers be used in place of adequate handwashing in food preparation areas?

No. Hand sanitizers do not take the place of adequate handwashing.

Eliminating Bare Hand Contact with Ready-To-Eat Foods



Ready-to-eat foods can be consumed without further cooking or washing. A child care center employee can contaminate ready-to-eat foods with their bare hands, which can contribute to foodborne illness in children. When handling ready-to-eat foods, employees should always wash their hands and use suitable utensils, such as single-use gloves, tongs, spatulas, deli tissue, or dispensing equipment.

Is it necessary to use single-use gloves when handling ready-to-eat food?

A barrier, such as single-use gloves, is necessary when working with ready-to-eat foods. Single-use gloves, along with handwashing, can be effective in preventing germs on the hands from contaminating food. However, gloves are effective in preventing contamination only if used properly.

What are the instructions for properly wearing single-use gloves?

Glove use should not take the place of handwashing. Child care center employees should properly wash their hands before putting on new single-use gloves. Employees should:

- Wear single-use gloves, or use another suitable utensil, when preparing and serving ready-to-eat foods.
- Change single-use gloves between tasks, such as between working with ready-to-eat and raw foods.
- Replace single-use gloves that are torn, damaged, or contaminated.
 - Single-use gloves may become contaminated when:
 - Sneezing, coughing, or touching skin and hair
 - Touching equipment, such as door handles
 - Handling other food
 - Conducting other tasks
- Do not wash or reuse single-use gloves.
- Cover an infected wound or lesion with a waterproof covering and a single-use glove.
- Ensure that single-use gloves fit properly.
- Consider using non-latex gloves to address latex allergies.

By following good employee health and personal hygiene practices – such as not working sick, washing hands properly, and avoiding touching ready-to-eat foods with bare hands—employees can reduce the risk of a foodborne illness outbreak.



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