Employee Health and Personal Hygiene for CHILD CARE CENTER STAFF
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The purpose of the National Food Service Management Institute is to improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

MISSION

The mission of the National Food Service Management Institute is to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

VISION

The vision of the National Food Service Management Institute is to be the leader in providing education, research, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with the National Food Service Management Institute at The University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

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Employee Health and Personal Hygiene for Child Care Center Staff

This guide highlights basic practices child care center employees can use to prevent spreading foodborne illnesses.

Basics of Foodborne Illness

What is a foodborne illness?
A foodborne illness is an illness that results from eating contaminated food.

What is a foodborne outbreak?
A foodborne outbreak is the occurrence of two or more cases of a similar illness resulting from ingestion of a common food.

What causes food contamination?
- Bacteria and virus from bare hands, cuts, sneezes, coughs, etc.
- Mold from poor storage or food that is too old.
- Physical contaminants such as hair, chemicals, glass, or metal.

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 will happen if a child care employee has any of these symptoms?
The supervisor 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.

What other incidents should be reported to the supervisor?
- Any broken glass or other containers.
- Any leaking or spilled cleaning products.
• Any food packaging that is damaged, broken open, or dented.
• Any food that smells bad, looks rotten, or is old.

**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 required for proper handwashing are:

1. Wet their hands with clean, running, warm water and apply soap.
2. Rub their hands together to make a lather and scrub them well; making sure to scrub the backs of their hands, between their fingers, and under their nails.
3. Continue rubbing their hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse their hands well under running water.
5. Dry their hands using a paper towel or air dry them.
6. Avoid re-contaminating their hands when turning the water off and discarding paper towels. Turn the water off using a paper towel, or a similar barrier. Trash cans with foot-pedal operated lids are preferable.
7. 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.
8. Assist the child in performing all of the above steps, and then wash your own hands.

**Why is handwashing important?**

Handwashing is critical to preventing 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. Proper handwashing helps to prevent foodborne illness.
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 human body parts, for example, parts other than clean hands and clean, exposed portions of arms.
- 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.
No Bare Hand Contact with Ready-To-Eat Foods

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 after sneezing, coughing, or touching skin and hair; touching equipment, such as door handles; handling other food; or 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.
References

CACFP Child and Adult Care Food Program, New York State Department of Health


