

Food Safety Fact Sheet

Physical Hazards

INTRODUCTION

There are three types of hazards that can cause a food to be unsafe: physical hazards, biological hazards, and chemical hazards. School nutrition employees have the responsibility to identify and minimize hazards in the food they serve.

HERE ARE THE FACTS

Physical hazards occur when a foreign object gets into food accidentally, or natural objects are left in food. Physical hazards can get into food by contamination or poor procedure practices throughout the food chain. Physical contaminants include dirt, hair, nail polish flakes, insects, broken glass, nails, staples, plastic fragments, bones, or bits of packaging.

APPLICATION

Follow written Standard Operating Procedures to minimize risks of physical hazards.

- Wear hair restraints such as hairnets, hats, or caps to minimize the opportunity for hair to fall into food.
- Do not wear nail polish or artificial nails. Polish can flake off and fall into food, and artificial nails can come loose and fall into food.
- Do not wear rings with stones or earrings that could fall into food.

Pay special attention to the food during preparation to identify physical contaminants.

- Take care to remove and discard all packaging from food.
- Remove all bones when deboning chicken or other meats.
- Look for possible contaminants. For example, dry beans must be sorted prior to washing to remove stones that may be there from harvest.
- Remove any toothpicks that might be used in food preparation.

Clean, maintain, and use equipment properly.

- Clean and sanitize equipment and utensils after each use.
- Clean blades of can openers after use to ensure that metal shavings do not accumulate.
- Use only commercial ice scoops when getting ice from an ice machine or portioning ice.
- Place shields on lights.
- Use shatterproof light bulbs.

Have routine pest control maintenance administered by a licensed pest control operator to reduce opportunities for pest contamination in food.

Remember, follow state or local health department requirements.





Physical Hazards cont.

References

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