

Food Safety Fact Sheet

Using Suitable Utensils When Handling Ready-to-Eat Foods

INTRODUCTION

Ready-to-eat foods will not be cooked further before serving; it is important to handle them properly. School nutrition employees must follow appropriate food handling techniques to ensure that these foods do not become contaminated during preparation, storage, holding, and service to customers.

HERE ARE THE FACTS

Because ready-to-eat foods will not have further heat treatment to kill microorganisms, special care is needed to decrease opportunities for cross contamination. Use of suitable utensils when handling ready-to-eat foods is one important way to ensure safety.

APPLICATION

Use suitable utensils when handling ready-to-eat foods.

- Wash hands and exposed parts of the arms properly before preparing or handling food or at anytime the hands may become contaminated.
- Use proper procedures for glove use, including washing hands before putting on gloves.
- Use utensils that are clean and sanitized when working with ready-to-eat food. Examples include the following:
 - ◊ Single-use gloves,
 - ◊ Deli tissue,
 - ◊ Foil wrap, and
 - ◊ Tongs, spoodles, spoons, and spatulas.
- Change utensils when they become contaminated.

Monitor use of utensils for handling ready-to-eat foods.

- Conduct visual inspections to make sure that guidelines for use of utensils are followed.
- Check to make sure that hands are washed at appropriate times.
- Check to make sure that utensils and gloves are changed at appropriate times.

Take corrective actions to ensure appropriate use of utensils when handling ready-to-eat foods.

- Replace contaminated utensils with clean and sanitized utensils.
- Discard ready-to-eat food that has been touched with bare hands.
- Record corrective actions taken.

Remember, follow state or local health department requirements.





Using Suitable Utensils When Handling Ready-to-Eat Foods cont.

References

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