

Food Safety Series (No.8)

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Personal Hygiene Requirements for People Preparing or Serving Food

WEB VERSION



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Introduction

These guidelines have been drawn up taking guidance from current food safety laws and regulations (see Food Safety – An introduction to legislation for University premises).

Good Habits

Food can become contaminated easily during preparation and service. Good habits are essential; there must be no nail biting, nose picking, spitting, finger licking or blowing on food and surfaces while dealing with food. Do not cough or sneeze over food, surfaces or hands.

Hand hygiene is one of the most important personal hygiene controls when dealing with food. A supply of liquid soap hot and cold running water and paper towels or hot air dryers must be available for hand washing. Hands must not be washed in a sink used for washing food or cleaning. Hands must not be dried on tea towels. When preparing or serving food individuals must always thoroughly wash and dry their hands regularly, in particular:

- Before handling food
- After handling raw foods
- After using or visiting the toilet
- After touching face, eyes, nose, mouth
- After blowing their nose
- After handling rubbish
- After using cleaning chemicals
- After eating, drinking or smoking

Where possible, food handlers should focus only on the preparation or serving task. However, if you do stop handling food to do

something else, such as answering the telephone or taking money from a customer, hands must be washed thoroughly before starting to handle food again.

When washing hands particular attention should be given to the areas between the fingers, thumbs, and around the nails.

If using disposable gloves ensure they are food grade and do not contain any latex. It is essential that gloves are changed frequently, especially after handling raw foods and before handling cooked/ ready to eat foods. It is also important to wash your hands when changing gloves.

Any handling, decanting, cutting or arranging of unwrapped food (by anybody other than the final consumer) is classed as food preparation and the further requirements below will apply.

When preparing food individuals should:

- Have a good understanding of the principle issues of food safety and how poor personal hygiene can cause food borne illness.
- Have good personal hygiene.
- Refrain from bad habits such as chewing gum, biting fingernails, playing with hair, picking spots and tasting food with fingers
- Wear clean clothes and a clean apron or protective garment to prevent dirt, buttons, fibres etc from clothing contaminating the food. If it is deemed necessary a head covering (e.g. hairnet or hat that covers the hair) should be worn.

- Wear a disposable apron when handling raw meat which must be discarded before moving on to ready to eat food preparation.
- Cover all cuts or sores with clean waterproof dressings, preferably brightly coloured ensuring any skin conditions are adequately covered.
- Not wear jewellery, watches, false nails or false eyelashes.
- Be in good health.

Individuals suffering from the symptoms of food poisoning (e.g. diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach upsets) must not prepare or serve food, as they could contaminate it and make others ill.

If a food handler has suspected food poisoning they should contact their GP and inform them that they work with food.

Individuals that have a skin condition or have suffered from diarrhoea and vomiting should not prepare or serve food until they have been free from symptoms for a minimum of 48 hours.

Anyone who has a family member who is suffering from diarrhoea and / or vomiting for more than 24hrs should not be allowed to prepare food.

Staff working in catering establishments have a legal responsibility to notify their manager / supervisor if they are suffering from these or any other symptoms of illness before working with food and must be excluded from food preparation areas.

Further information

- Food Standards Agency website (www.food.gov.uk)
- Other leaflets in the Food Safety Series
- from MAS Environmental (www.masenv.co.uk/fsq)

Other leaflets in the Food Safety Guidance

Notes Series

- 1 Food Safety – An introduction to legislation for University premises
- 2 Catering Options - A guide for departments and faculties
- 3 Staff Kitchens and Tearooms – General hygiene requirements
- 4 Food Hygiene Training Requirements
- 5 Guidance on Departmental Barbecue Safety
- 6 Purchase, Delivery and Storage of Food
- 7 Preparation and Service of Food
- 9 Cleaning and Pest Control in Food Preparation Areas
- 10 Food Safety Guidance for Departmental Christmas Parties
- 11 Food Safety for Charity Events – A guide for departments and faculties
- 12 Food Complaints - A guide for departments and University operated food outlets
- 13 Allergens

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