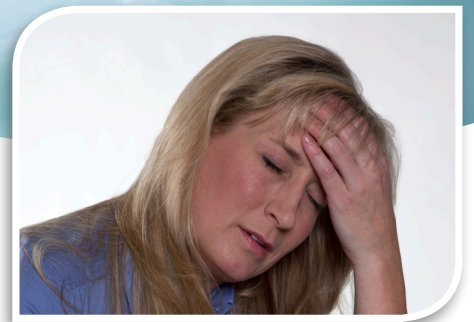


Employee Health *and* Personal Hygiene *for* SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF



Institute of Child Nutrition

The University of Mississippi

The Institute of Child Nutrition was authorized by Congress in 1989 and established in 1990 at The University of Mississippi in Oxford and is operated in collaboration with The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. The Institute operates under a grant agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Institute of Child Nutrition is to improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

MISSION

The mission of the Institute of Child Nutrition is to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

VISION

The vision of the Institute of Child Nutrition 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 Institute of Child Nutrition 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.

The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/TitleVI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights; Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

© 2016, Institute of Child Nutrition, The University of Mississippi, School of Applied Sciences

Except as provided below, you may freely use the text and information contained in this document for non-profit or educational use with no cost to the participant for the training providing the following credit is included. These materials may not be incorporated into other websites or textbooks and may not be sold.

Suggested Reference Citation:

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2016). *Employee health and personal hygiene for school nutrition staff*. University, MS: Author.

The photographs and images in this document may be owned by third parties and used by The University of Mississippi under a licensing agreement. The University cannot, therefore, grant permission to use these images.

Employee Health and Personal Hygiene for School Nutrition Staff

The incidence of foodborne illness in school nutrition programs is very low because of the thorough food safety practices of school nutrition employees. Even though incidence of foodborne illness is low, there are still risks.

School Foodborne Illness Due to Poor Employee Practices

The following foodborne illness scenario highlights how a sick school nutrition employee can spread foodborne illness. A school nutrition employee spent the weekend suffering with vomiting and diarrhea, but feeling a little better, came to work the following Monday. Working with bare hands, she chopped the lettuce to be served for lunch. Dozens of students and teachers became ill the next day. The local health department investigation traced the illnesses to the food handled by the ill employee and implicated the employee as the source of the contamination.

This guide highlights basic practices school nutrition employees can use to prevent spreading pathogens.



Basics of Foodborne Illness

What causes foodborne illness?

Over 40 different kinds of pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, parasites, and molds that may occur in food can cause foodborne illness. Foodborne illness

also can be caused by non-infectious agents, such as chemicals, toxins, and metals. A foodborne illness is commonly referred to as “food poisoning” or “stomach flu.”

What is a foodborne illness outbreak?

An outbreak is when two or more people get the same illness from eating contaminated food with a common source.

Who is affected by foodborne illness?

Everyone is at risk for foodborne illness; however, some people are considered “highly susceptible populations” because they are:

- Immunocompromised - that is, they have an immune system that has been damaged by disease or medical treatment;
- Preschool-age children;

- Older adults; and
- Confined to facilities that provide custodial care (such as hospitals or assisted-living facilities).

Do school nutrition employees have a responsibility to prevent foodborne illness?

Yes. School nutrition employees share the responsibility with management for preventing foodborne illness and are required to know:

- How their job responsibilities relate to the potential risks of foodborne illness;
- How employee health is related to foodborne illness;
- Symptoms of foodborne illness;
- When to report to the manager/director that they or a co-employee is experiencing symptoms;
- Why restriction or exclusion from working with food may be necessary to prevent foodborne illness;
- How effective handwashing can prevent foodborne illness; and
- How eliminating bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food can prevent foodborne illnesses.



Restricting or Excluding Ill School Nutrition Employees

What symptoms or conditions should school nutrition employees report to their supervisor?

The following symptoms or conditions should be reported:

- Diarrhea or vomiting;
- Sore throat with a fever;
- An infected cut or wound on hands or arms;
- Jaundice (eyes or skin turns yellow);
- Diagnosis with a foodborne illness;
- Exposure to a foodborne illness.



What should managers/directors do once the symptoms are reported?

Depending on the symptom or diagnosis, the manager/director will decide if the employee needs to immediately be “restricted” or “excluded” from duties to prevent foodborne illness.

What is *exclusion*?

Exclusion means a school nutrition employee is not permitted to work in or enter a food preparation site. This requirement applies to areas where food is received, prepared, stored, packaged, served, vended, transported, or purchased.

Most often, this means that the school nutrition employee may not work at all. Though this can result in some loss of income, it is very important that school nutrition employees with certain symptoms not work to prevent others from becoming ill.

What is *restriction*?

Restriction means a school nutrition employee’s activities are limited to prevent the risk of

transmitting a disease that is spread through food. A restricted employee cannot handle exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens, or unwrapped single-service or single-use articles. Job duties for employees who are restricted may include working as a cashier, stocking canned or other packaged foods, or working in cleaning or maintenance tasks away from food preparation areas.

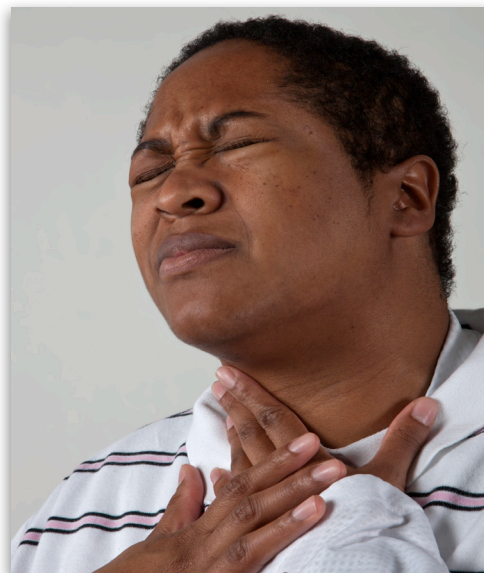


Who can *exclude* or *restrict* a school nutrition employee?

The school nutrition manager/director has the authority to exclude or restrict a school nutrition employee from the school food preparation site to prevent the spread of illness through food. The local health department also has the authority to exclude or restrict a school nutrition employee who is suspected of being at risk for transmitting foodborne illness.

Who can lift the exclusions and restrictions?

In most cases, the school nutrition manager/director removes, adjusts, or retains the exclusion or restriction. In some cases, an approval from a medical provider or the local health department is required to lift an exclusion or restriction depending on the illness.





Effective Handwashing

What is effective handwashing?

Effective 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 effective handwashing:

1. Use the handwashing sink with running warm water.
2. Rinse hands and exposed parts of the arms under running water and apply soap.
3. Lather hands together for at least 10-15 seconds, paying close attention to fingernails, between the fingers/fingertips, and surfaces of the hands and arms.
4. Rinse thoroughly with clean, warm running water.
5. Thoroughly dry the hands and exposed portions of arms with single-use paper towels, a heated-air hand-drying device, or a hand drying device that employs an air-knife system.
6. Avoid recontamination of hands and arms by using a paper towel to turn off hand sink faucets and/or to open the restroom door.

Why is handwashing important?

Handwashing reduces contamination on hands and prevents it from passing to food. Organisms can get on hands from a number of sources—such as a dirty cutting board, a pencil, or a refrigerator handle—and then move from hands to food or

equipment during preparation and service. An infected school nutrition employee or one with unclean hands, or exposed portions of arms or fingernails can contaminate food, potentially causing illness. Food equipment contaminated by unclean hands can further spread illness through cross contamination.

When should school nutrition employees wash their hands?

Hands should be washed immediately:

- When entering a food preparation area;
- Before putting on new, single-use gloves for working with food and between glove changes;
- Before starting food preparation;
- Before handling clean equipment and serving utensils;
- When changing tasks and switching between handling raw foods and working with ready-to-eat foods;
- After handling soiled dishes, equipment, or utensils;
- After touching bare human body parts, for example, hair, face, or other exposed skin;
- After using the toilet; and
- After coughing, sneezing, blowing the nose, eating, or drinking.

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, and if used should be applied only after proper handwashing.



No Bare Hand Contact with Ready-To-Eat Foods

Is it necessary to use single-use gloves when preparing food?

When hands are heavily contaminated, effective handwashing may not thoroughly remove microorganisms to ensure safety. The FDA requires the use of suitable utensils such as spatulas, tongs, single-use gloves, or dispensing equipment when handling ready-to-eat foods (i.e., food that is eaten without further washing or cooking). Single-use gloves used after handwashing can be an effective barrier to the transfer of microorganisms from hands to food. However, gloves are effective in preventing contamination only if used properly.

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

1. Always wash hands before putting on gloves.
2. Change single-use gloves when changing tasks and between handling raw products and ready-to-eat products.
3. Do not wash or reuse single-use gloves.
4. Replace torn or damaged single-use gloves.
5. Cover an infected cut, burn or boil with pus with a waterproof covering and a single-use glove.



References

Food and Drug Administration. (2013). *Employee health and personal hygiene handbook*. Retrieved from <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/IndustryandRegulatoryAssistanceandTrainingResources/ucm113827.htm>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Public Health Services, Food and Drug Administration. (2013). *FDA food code*. Retrieved from <http://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/retailfoodprotection/foodcode/ucm374275.htm>



The University of Mississippi
School of Applied Sciences
800-321-3054
www.theicn.org