



## Food Safety in Child Care Facilities

Whether food is prepared in the child care facility or brought from home, handling food safely reduces the risk of food poisoning or food-borne illness.

### What is food poisoning or food-borne illness?

Food poisoning or food-borne illness is caused by eating foods or drinking beverages contaminated by germs such as bacteria, viruses, moulds, or parasites. The food or beverage becomes contaminated when it is not prepared or stored safely, or if it is handled by someone with food poisoning.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of food poisoning and food-borne illness vary and include the following:

- fever
- stomach cramps
- diarrhea
- nausea
- vomiting

Symptoms can last for hours, days, or even months. They can be mild or serious enough for you to go to the hospital. If you have these symptoms, you should not handle or serve food.

### How can you prevent food poisoning or food-borne illness?

If you handle or serve food, you can help keep food safe from harmful germs. Here are some steps you can take to reduce the risk of food poisoning and food-borne illness.

#### Wash Your Hands

Wash your hands properly before you eat or handle food. Hand washing includes scrubbing all parts of your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds and rinsing them under warm water. Dry your hands with a clean cloth or paper towel.

#### Wash and Sanitize Surfaces and Utensils

Always wash and sanitize surfaces where you prepare and place foods. Many cases of food poisoning and contamination are caused by using the same cutting board, plate or utensil to prepare raw meat and ready-to-eat foods. Cutting boards, plates and utensils must always be washed and sanitized immediately before foods are placed on them.

Remember, wash dishcloths as well. Warm and damp dishcloths can be breeding grounds for bacteria. They are often used to wipe contaminated and other surfaces where foods are prepared or placed, which can spread harmful bacteria. Dishcloths must be washed well and sanitized regularly.

You can make a sanitizing solution as follows:

- Mix ½ ounce or 1 tablespoon of 6 per cent household bleach into 1 gallon of water; or,
- Mix 1 teaspoon of 6 per cent bleach into 1 litre of water.

#### Separate Foods

Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and juices separate from one another and from other ready-to-eat foods.

Do not use utensils or dishes that touched raw meat for cooked meat or other ready-to-eat foods.

#### Refrigerate Foods

Return foods to the refrigerator or freezer promptly after using them. Perishable foods should not be kept at room temperature for longer than 2 hours. Keep cold foods at 4°C (40°F) or colder.

#### Cook Foods

- Cook foods to an internal temperature of 74°C (165°F) and check with a food thermometer.
- Keep hot foods at 60°C (140°F) or hotter.

- Reheat foods to at least 74°C (165°F).
- Food reheated in a microwave should reach 88°C (190°F) and be allowed to stand covered for 2 minutes afterwards.

### Which foods should child care facilities serve?

Child care facilities should buy foods from approved sources, such as commercial retail suppliers. Make sure fresh and packaged foods are used by the best before date.

Donated food should only be accepted unopened, such as sealed containers of baked products.

### Which foods have a lower risk of causing food poisoning?

The following foods are less likely to cause food poisoning:

- Applesauce and other canned fruits
- Fresh fruits and vegetables, washed well under cool running water. Firm skinned fruits and vegetables, such as melons, scrubbed with a clean brush while washing.
- Baked products, such as breads, rolls, bagels, muffins, loaves, and cookies with no meat, fish, cream or cheese fillings
- Plain crackers
- Unsweetened dry cereal

### How can facilities help children to be aware of food safety?

Meal and snack time routines should always include washing hands before eating. Show children how to wash their hands properly, especially after using the washroom and before eating.

You can involve children in basic food preparation and create a simple dish as a group activity. To be safe, food that children help prepare for the group should be cooked, such as muffins instead of salad. Teach children the importance of carefully washing their hands before preparing food, and how to cough and sneeze into their sleeves and to rewash their hands.

### How can parents pack food safely?

Parents should pack hot food in a thermos. Cold foods should be kept refrigerated by using cold packs or stored in the refrigerator until serving.

### What permits and training are available for child care providers?

A licensed child care facility that prepares and handles food regularly may require a permit under the Public Health Act. For more information, visit [www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws\\_new/document/ID/freeside/11\\_210\\_99](http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/11_210_99).

The Caring about Food Safety course is strongly recommended for all child care providers. Visit [www.foodsafety.gov.bc.ca](http://www.foodsafety.gov.bc.ca) for more information.

### For more information

- Food Flair™ Early Learning Practitioners Resource is available to order at [www.2010legaciesnow.com/foodflair\\_elp/](http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/foodflair_elp/).
- Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education at [www.canfightbac.org/en/](http://www.canfightbac.org/en/)
- [Food Safety: Ten Easy Steps to Make Food Safe](#)
- [Food Safety for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables](#)
- [Unpasteurized Fruit Juices: A Potential Health Risk](#)
- [Foods to Avoid for People at Risk of Food-borne Illness](#)

You can also contact your community nutritionist, or call 8-1-1 and speak to a registered dietitian.

For more HealthLink BC File topics, visit [www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles/index.stm](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles/index.stm) or your local public health unit.

Click on [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca) or call **8-1-1** for non-emergency health information and services in B.C.

For deaf and hearing-impaired assistance, call 7-1-1 in B.C.

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