

Preparing Food

- Wear disposable gloves or use utensils when preparing or serving ready-to-eat foods.
- Rinse all produce, especially if it is to be eaten raw.
- Produce should be rinsed by running it under cold water with manual agitation, rather than by soaking in standing water.
- Keep juices from raw meats, fish, or poultry away from all other foods.
- Serve cooked foods on clean platters. Never use a contaminated platter that held raw meats, fish, or poultry.
- Do not serve sprouts or unpasteurized fruit juices.

Serving Food

- Do not touch foods with bare hands. Use a barrier such as gloves, utensils (spoons, tongs), or any other disposable or cleanable barrier.
- Do not allow perishable food to sit at room temperature for more than two hours, this includes preparation time. Keep track. After two hours, refrigerate, reheat, or throw it away.
- Arrange and serve food on several small platters instead of one large one. Keep the rest of the food either hot or cold.
- Keep hot foods hot (above 135° F).
- Keep cold foods cold (below 41° F). Nest dishes in bowls of ice if possible.

Storing Food

- Refrigerate leftovers immediately.
- Quickly reheat all leftovers or previously cooked foods) to at least 165° F.



We recommend all child care providers obtain a Washington State Food Worker Card.

Children are at high risk for diseases like *E. coli* O157:H7. During this training, you will learn food safety techniques and receive updated information on serving safe meals and snacks.

Topics include:

- Safe food temperatures
- Proper food handling and sanitation practices
- Identifying potentially hazardous foods
- Use of a thermometer
- Minimizing germs

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Preparing and Serving Safe Food in Child Care Programs



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With all of the responsibilities you have caring for children, you may not have much time to think about food safety. Millions of people each year become ill with a foodborne illness and about 3,000 die. Children are more susceptible than adults to foodborne illness due to their system and smaller body size.

We are very fortunate in this country to have a safe food supply. However, our food may cause more illnesses than we realize. You may be surprised to learn that health officials estimate that most cases of “24 hour stomach flu” are really food-related illnesses (food poisoning). Here in Washington we all know how devastating E. coli can be, especially to children.

Things that can make food unsafe to eat include:

- Viruses, which can get into food by sneezing, coughing, and unclean hands.
- Bacteria, which can grow in food if the food is not held at proper temperatures.
- Contaminants due to improper food storage.

Each year, thousands of Washington residents become ill from food that is prepared in an unsafe manner. Protecting yourself and the children in your care against foodborne illness can be simple. Here are a few basic rules for food safety:

Keep hands clean and sanitize cooking surfaces.

- Always wash hands before you begin to prepare food and after handling raw meats. Use warm water, soap, and paper towels. Remember: clean-looking hands may be contaminated with millions of germs. Inadequate handwashing is a leading cause of foodborne disease today!
- Dry hands with paper towels. Cloth towels spread germs.
- Teach children the importance of washing their hands.
- Keep your kitchen and utensils clean. Sanitize cutting boards, knives, and countertops after each use with a sanitizing solution approved by the FDA for use on food contact surfaces.



Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

- Bacteria grow best between 41° - 135° F. We call this the “danger zone.”
- The longest time foods should be at room temperature is 2 hours (1 hour in hot weather).
- Refrigerate foods immediately. Do not leave food on the counter to “cool down”. Break solid food (meat) into small pieces and cool in uncovered containers on the top shelf of the refrigerator. Only cover the container after the food is below 41° F.
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, in a cold running water bath, or in the microwave.
- Marinate raw foods in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Discard any used marinade.

Thoroughly cook meat, fish, eggs, and poultry.

- Use a food thermometer (digital or stem-type) to check that meats and poultry are cooked to the recommended temperatures (Ground beef 155 °F; Beef, Pork, and Fish 145°F; and Poultry 165°F).
- Cook eggs so that yolks are not runny.
- Never eat or serve foods with raw eggs (homemade ice cream, eggnog, or cookie dough) unless prepared with a pasteurized egg product.
- Microwave ovens, if used to heat food, require special care. Food must be heated to 165° F, stirred during heating, and allowed to sit at least 2 minutes before serving.

