



UNIT-7 Food Safety and Storage

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the importance of a carefully controlled food storage procedures
- ✓ Help safeguard children who may be allergic to certain foods and ingredients
- ✓ Discuss the temperatures food must be stored or held at for health and safety

Unit 7

Food Safety and Storage

Preparing and serving food is a daily routine in any child care setting, and ensuring that the food you serve is safe to eat is critical to the health and safety of the children. While anyone can become very ill from unknowingly eating bacteria-contaminated foods, young children are at a higher risk due to their developing digestive systems and immune systems.

This not only restricts the types of foods they can eat, but it also affects their ability to fight infections and illnesses brought on by contaminated food, as well as putting them at risk of a life-threatening allergic reaction. When you, as a caregiver, understand and consistently follow simple food safety precautions for storing, preparing, and serving foods, including breast milk, you help to prevent contamination, spoilage, and the spread of foodborne illnesses.

You can also help prevent a serious allergic reaction in a child by asking family members about their child's food allergies and being diligent about ensuring that the child is not given those foods.

Food Hygiene

Procedures:

1. Keep the area and process of food preparation clean:
 - Wash and sanitize all surfaces and equipment used for food preparation
 - Protect food-preparation areas from insects, pests, and other animals before handling food, frequently during food preparation, and afterwards.
2. Keep raw and cooked foods separate:
 - Keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood separate from other foods, and handle raw foods with separate equipment and utensils such as knives and cutting boards.
 - Store food in leak-proof containers to prevent raw and cooked foods from coming into contact.
3. Fully cook:
 - Cook foods thoroughly to recommended temperatures, especially meats, poultry, eggs, and seafood.
4. Maintain proper food temperatures:
 - Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold by keeping them separate.
 - Cooked foods should not be left at room temperature for more than two hours.

5. Use water and raw materials that are clean and safe:
 - Wash and cook your food with clean, safe water.
 - Wash fruits and vegetables before eating them raw, especially if they're going to be eaten raw.
 - Do not eat food that has passed its expiration date.

Allergies to Foods

Procedures:

1. Collect information from the family about the child's known food allergies when registering a new child in your program.
 - Request that the family provide a care plan that includes the following items, as prepared by the child's health care provider:
 - Food(s) to which the child is allergic - Symptoms that would indicate the need for medication
 - Any medication's names, doses, and methods of administration
 - Have the family sign the Consent for Medication Administration Form.
2. Actions to take to avoid being exposed to known allergens:
 - Display a prominent sign about a specific child's food allergies in your food preparation area, where staff can see it, and/or wherever food is served.
 - To reduce the risk of an unintentional exposure, consider removing the offending food entirely from your site.
 - Inform families of any known food allergens among the children in your care, and request that they refrain from bringing any of the offending foods to your facility.
3. Recognizing allergic reaction symptoms:
 - At mealtimes, sit with the child. Sneezing that comes on suddenly, redness, hives, itchy skin, swollen or bluish skin or lips, choking, or inability to speak are all signs of allergic reactions.
 - Listen for signs of discomfort and keep an eye out for them. If your child is verbal, he or she may be able to tell you something.
 - Something is poking my tongue
 - My tongue (or mouth) is itching (or burning)
 - My tongue is hot
 - There is something stuck in my throat
 - My lips are tight
 - There are bugs in my ears

4. Allergic reactions and their treatment:

- Administer the prescribed medication promptly and in accordance with the care plan.
- If there are any suspected allergic reactions or contact with the allergen, notify the child's parent(s) right away, even if a reaction does not occur.
- Take the written care plan, a phone, emergency phone numbers, and proper medications on field trips or any other type of transportation away from your site, and call 999 if necessary.

1. Make sure all breast milk containers are dated.

2. Refrigerating freshly expressed breast milk: Place containers of breast milk in the refrigerator's center, not on the door.

3. Temporarily storing outside the refrigerator:

- Place the breast milk container in a cooler with ice packs; it can be safely kept for up to four hours if the temperature in the cooler is consistently less than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, or 37 degrees Celsius.

4. Freezing it: Frozen breast milk can be kept in a refrigerator freezer compartment for up to two weeks.

5. How to Defrost Frozen Breast Milk

- Place the frozen milk in the refrigerator or run it under warm water to defrost it.
- Do not use the microwave to defrost frozen milk or boil it on the stove.
- Use breast milk that has been defrosted in the refrigerator within 24 hours.
- Within 1 hour, use defrosted milk that has reached room temperature.
- Defrosted milk should not be refrozen.

Cooking Temperatures

Standard advice is to cook food until it has reached a core temperature of 70°C for 2 minutes. The other time and temperature combinations are:

- 60°C for 45 minutes
- 65°C for 10 minutes
- 70°C for 2 minutes
- 75°C for 30 seconds
- 80°C for 6 seconds

Cooking food at the right temperature and for the correct length of time will ensure that any harmful bacteria are killed.

Cold food must be kept at 8°C or below - a legal requirement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In addition, hot food which is to be kept hot for any amount of time must be held at a temperature of at least 63°C or higher.

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Introducing Child Psychology: A Practical Guide, (2011), By Kairen Cullen*
- ✓ *Child Psychology: A Very Short Introduction, (2014), By Usha Goswami*
- ✓ *An Introduction to Child Development, (2009), By Thomas Keenan, Subhadra Evans*