



Infection Prevention & Control: Handling of Food Policy

Introduction

As a support worker you may be asked to prepare food for a client. As part of the induction training all Support Workers will be instructed in Infection Prevention and Control and food hygiene and must always follow the procedures and guidance that form this policy to ensure the health and safety of our clients and any other person that may come into contact with the food.

What causes food to become unsafe?

The first step that will contribute to the prevention of food poisoning is to avoid contamination of food by pathogens. In simple terms this involves keeping the sources of pathogens away from both the food itself and any surfaces and utensils that may be used for food preparation.

The main sources of pathogens, which are microorganisms that cause food to become unsafe are people, raw foods, pests, pets, air, dust, and food waste.

Contamination

The presence of unwanted material, usually microorganisms, in food, which makes it unsafe or unpleasant to eat.

Cross-Contamination

The transfer of pathogens from a contaminated food (usually raw items such as meat, poultry, and vegetables) to other foods.

Indirect Contamination

When pathogens transfer onto something, which may later come into contact with food, for example when raw meat juices are left on a knife that will later be used to slice ham or a fly lands on a surface where food is to be prepared.

Personal Hygiene

People are a significant source of pathogens and may easily contaminate foods, most people will carry some type of food-poisoning bacteria at some point, either in their gut or on their body without ever knowing that the pathogens are there, therefore it is particularly important to take care with personal hygiene, and particularly to keep hands clean and avoid habits which could cause contamination when preparing food.

Hands and Nails

Hands are the most likely way in which a person will contaminate food because they touch equipment, utensils and probably the food itself. In the course of the day hands will also touch many sources of pathogens. It is therefore essential that hands are regularly and thoroughly washed using hot water and soap and then dried with a clean towel particularly when food is to be handled.



Nails can also harbour bacteria so they should be kept clean.

Be aware that jewellery such as rings and watches can also harbour bacteria and often prevent hands from being thoroughly clean even when washed.

It is Griffiths Knight Case Management Ltd's policy to provide all of its support workers with alcohol hand cleanser, (at least 70% alcohol) which is to be used in addition to normal hand washing.

Skin, Cuts and Spots

Many people carry bacteria on their skin, which is often found in high numbers in cuts, spots, boils and other skin sores. A blue waterproof dressing should therefore cover cuts and sores to stop the chance of bacteria being passed onto food.

Nose, Mouth and Ears

Almost half the population carry staphylococcus aureus pathogens in these areas it is therefore important to avoid habits, which could transfer these bacteria into food, such as coughing or sneezing over food, picking or scratching the nose or ears whilst handling food or tasting food with a finger or spoon and dipping it back in.

Hair

Hair and the scalp carry bacteria, therefore, hair should be tied back if it is long and brushing or combing should not take place in food preparation areas as it may find its way into food.

Clothing

Clothing may easily pick up dirt and bacteria and some materials may shed fibres that can end up in food. It is therefore important to ensure that clothes are not dirty when preparing food. It is advisable to wear an apron, it is Griffiths Knight Case Management's policy to provide all support workers with a pack of aprons, these should not be worn for different tasks such as to help with personal hygiene and then to prepare food, a fresh apron should be worn for each task. All caregivers, once they are compliant to lone work, will be issued with 2 polo shirts and a picture Identification Badge which they are expected to wear whilst they are carrying out direct care to our clients. Support workers must wear shoes that cover the toes at all times. Jeans, normally black or of a dark colour are acceptable.

Guts

When people suffer from food poisoning, they are likely to have high numbers of pathogens in their gut which will be passed on in their faeces, these will normally be transferred to the hands through toilet paper, lavatory seats, flush handles, etc. It is therefore important to thoroughly wash your hands after each visit to the toilet and it is advisable not to prepare food for anyone else if suffering from sickness or diarrhoea.



Kitchen Equipment

It is important to ensure that all crockery, cutlery, utensils, and any equipment are clean before they are used and are washed thoroughly afterwards.

Food Storage

When storing and preparing food it is important to keep raw food and ready- to eat food separate at all stages. Fridges and freezers should keep food adequately chilled or frozen and packed so that juices from raw food cannot drip or come into contact with cooked food. Food should be stored in suitable containers or wrapped in film.

Spillages and Waste

All spillages and food waste should be cleared up promptly, rubbish should be stored in a suitable bin, which is emptied and disinfected regularly.

Housekeeping

All food preparation areas should be kept clean and tidy, food debris should be cleaned up and surfaces cleaned at regular intervals with disinfectant or antibacterial cleaner, floors should be cleaned with bleach or disinfectant regularly.

Kitchen cloths should be kept clean and regularly changed, bleached, or disinfected.

Pets should be kept out of food preparation areas.

HYGIENE FOR FOOD HANDLERS

1. You must wash your hands immediately before commencing work and after using the toilet.
2. Any cut or burn on the hand or arm must be covered with an approved visible dressing.
3. Head coverings and overalls/uniforms, where provided, must be worn at all times.
4. No jewellery should be worn, other than wedding rings, without the permission of the Care Manager.
5. You should not wear excessive amounts of make-up or perfume and nail varnish should not be worn. Nails should be kept clean and short.
6. If you are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness, or have a bowel disorder, boils, skin, or mouth infection, you must not report for work without clearance from your own doctor.



7. Contact with any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease must be reported and you must have clearance from your own doctor before commencing work.

You must report to your Manager before commencing work.

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