

Food Safety Protocol for EFNEP/FSNEP Food Preparation & Demonstration

Our planning team agreed that the main objective of this manual was for people to think through their habits concerning food safety and to greatly minimize the risk of food contamination and potential liability as well as serve as role models to participants and others in their offices.

PLANNING (selecting recipes, preparing shopping list, cooking utensil checklist)

As you review the lesson plan and recipe(s) you are preparing to teach, keep food safety foremost in your mind. What does the facility have in the way of counter space, running water, sinks, accessible restrooms, etc. This may help you decide your food demonstration limitations.

- If you leave your equipment in your car or in the container from a previous lesson, repack your necessary cooking equipment as well as the lesson plan, handouts, and evaluations.
- All equipment should be transported to the site in a plastic container with a tight fitting lid or in a food safe plastic bag to keep equipment clean. If you are not transporting in this manner, the cooking equipment needs to be wiped down with a sanitizer prior to food preparation. Please wash traveling containers each month.
- Foods not requiring refrigeration should be in a separate container with a tight fitting lid.
- Any food items that need to stay cold (40 degrees or below) must be transported in a cooler with ice packs or ice. If you are traveling for longer than 30 minutes, take the temperature of your product when you arrive at the facility where you will be conducting the class. The temperature of cold foods needs to stay at or below 40 degrees.
- Several sets of utensils are recommended for each lesson, but this can add to the weight you must carry. If a utensil is accidentally dropped on the floor, or you are preparing more than one item or dish, you will need to have clean, sanitized utensils at the ready. You can set up a plastic wash basin prior to class with sanitizing solution to use for utensils that get dropped, if you are not in a room with a sink.
- You may choose to carry a plastic bottle of liquid hand soap, a roll of paper towels, and a couple of trash bags if you are not sure the restrooms at the facility will be well equipped. A pump hand sanitizer is recommended for class participants to use when returning from the restroom, blowing their nose, etc.

YOUR VEHICLE

If you normally travel with pets, trash, recycling, etc. in your car when you are not working, be sure to cover the trunk/storage compartment or seats with a clean sheet, towel, or plastic bag before loading equipment to keep pet hair and dirt off food and equipment. This will keep the risk of food contamination at a minimum.

SHOPPING (protocol for hot and cold items)

- Make a mental note of what food items will need refrigeration.
- Will you need to bring a cooler with an ice pack?
- Do you have a refrigerator in your office?
- If you will be going directly to the site, how long will your cold items be “out of temperature”?
- If you already have some staple foods from previous lessons, do you need extra plastic bags to portion out smaller quantities?
- HAVE YOU PACKED YOUR FOOD THERMOMETER?



**We wanted our EFNEP
and FSNE nutrition
assistants to practice
food safety and serve
as role models**

- When you make up your grocery list, group groceries for easier shopping. Get items that require refrigeration at the end of your shopping.

PREPARATION ON SITE (or alternative kitchen)

It is preferable for nutrition assistants to prepare food items for any demonstrations in a public kitchen. (Licensed kitchens are ideal). Some extension offices do have a kitchen facility while others do not. Are there other kitchens in your county that would allow food preparation? Are there suitable accommodations at the meeting space you have arranged for the class? If at all possible, try to hold classes at a facility with a licensed kitchen so the food won't have to be transported as well. Here are some examples of kitchens to check on:

- Bank community rooms
- WIC centers
- Community Centers
- Senior Centers
- Local VFW/Masonic Lodge, etc.
- Churches
- Food Banks with licensed kitchens

Recipes have been modified to allow you to select the most appropriate food preparation for your class situation. Choose from the BAKE/SKILLET/NO-COOK recipes in your new master recipe file.

Be sure to notify the person in charge of the kitchen facility if anything in the kitchen is not in proper working order when you arrive.

PREPARATION IN THE HOME

As a last resort, if the facility where you will be demonstrating has no running water (except the restroom), or if you are preparing foods for a display *and no other kitchen option is available*, you may use your home kitchen. Use the guidelines below following the headings, "on arrival", "food preparation", and "clean up". You are serving the public. **As of Oct. 2004, we hope to have all nutrition assistants working in public kitchens for all food preparation and clean up.**

ON ARRIVAL

Arrive early enough to allow time to prepare surfaces, food, and materials before participants arrive. The following guidelines apply to all workspaces EXCEPT HOME VISITS FOR EFNEP*.

- *Visitors in the kitchen should be discouraged (pets, and others not essential to the program).
- *Smoking should not be allowed anywhere near your food or dish handling area.
- All prep and eating surfaces need to be wiped down with a sanitizing solution. (Use a spray bottle with 1 quart of water mixed with 1 teaspoon of bleach. Let surface air-dry).
- Personal appearance and hygiene-
- Be sure your clothing is clean and appropriate.
- Remove jewelry.
- Hold your hair away from the face.
- Use a clean apron.

FOOD DEMONSTRATION

Before you begin be sure to set a good example by washing your hands thoroughly using lesson guidelines.

- Be sure to stop and wash hands after handling raw food, trash, touching hair, face, or body, eating or drinking, cleaning, etc.
- If you are demonstrating a food item that is not going to be cooked, wear disposable plastic food-handling gloves. Have participants who are helping with any food prep of raw product also wear food-handling gloves. (Participants must wash hands even if they are wearing gloves).
- If you need to prepare foods that have cross-contamination potential, you need to have two separate cutting boards. If you are having several participants cut items that do not really require a cutting board or will not be a cross-contamination hazard, you may use two or three paper plates stacked together for cutting.
- All fruits and vegetables must be washed before cutting. If this is to be done prior to your lesson, place the washed and cut items in a clean (not re-used) sealed plastic bags.
- All can lids to be used must be washed. Cleaning with a paper towel that has been moistened with sanitizing solution is preferable if you do not have a sink with hot water available.

CLEAN UP ON SITE

Participants may choose to help you with final clean up. All surfaces need to be wiped down. All utensils and equipment used during the lesson must be washed, rinsed and sanitized. Remember to include the can opener as well. Most licensed kitchens have three compartment sinks that make this step easier. IF you DO NOT have a three-compartment sink, bring an extra plastic dishpan for the sanitizing step. If you are using a facility that has NO DISH SINK available, scrape solid food particles from equipment and place equipment in a large trash bag to transport to another location.

- Sanitize all sink compartments PRIOR to filling.
- Remove visible debris.
- Wash in hot soapy water.
- Rinse in very hot water, as hot as you can stand.
- Submerge items in a sanitizing solution in the third sink compartment or plastic dishpan. (Occasionally your equipment may be too large to submerge in the sanitizing solution. Pour some of the solution into the item and gently swirl the item to swish around the sanitizer). This can be warm water with 1 tablespoon of bleach per gallon of water. Leave items submerged for 1 minute.
- Air drying in a drain board is the best drying option, but if time does not allow, be sure to use a freshly laundered dish towel or paper towels.
- If you have used a blender for food preparation, remove the bottom blade and gasket by unscrewing the base of the blender. Wash all parts separately. Air dry before re-assembling when possible as it prevents mold from developing on the rubber gasket.

CLEAN UP OFF SITE

If equipment needs to be cleaned off site (including your home kitchen), follow the directions above for “on arrival” and “clean up on site.”

STORAGE OF DRY GOODS

Transfer extra dry goods to clean containers with tight fitting lids. (I.E. Rice, pasta, sugar, flour). Storage of all containers must be stored off the floor and in a cool location.

STORAGE OF PERISHABLE ITEMS

- Leftover food needs proper attention. Determine if the product has been stored properly.
- Do you have disposable containers for the food?
- If participant(s) are to take food home, do they have proper refrigeration and live close enough to transport safely?
- If there is any question, quietly dispose of leftovers after the participants have left.

To access additional information pertaining to food safety issues or food borne illness, log on to the Montana State University Extension web site- Nutrition heading- see resource listings under “food safety”. (www.montana.edu/extensionnutrition/)

Sincere thanks to the nutrition assistants and FCS agents who brainstormed with us to solve these food safety issues. Special thanks to Dr. Lynn Paul, MSU Extension Nutrition Specialist, and Laurie Latt, FCS Agent, Big Horn County, for reviewing the material and offering their expertise.

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Roundtable Discussion Questions

The following questions were presented to EFNEP and FSNE nutrition assistants, in order to gauge current practices and to develop a protocol for food safety in demonstrations.

Planning

- Should we have a variety of recipes available for each lesson to accommodate different teaching facilities? (I.e. simpler cold dishes when sinks are not available for washing)
- Is shopping generally done for each class or at the beginning of the week? Do you think a packing list of food and equipment would be helpful for each lesson?
- Should we choose not to hold classes in unsuitable facilities?
- Other ideas?

Transportation

- Our personal vehicles are used for all kinds of transportation needs. How can we reduce the risk of contaminating food and possibly equipment in our vehicles? (I.e. some people keep their cooking equipment in the trunk of their car for easy access.)
- Do you think we should institute a sanitizing dip after washing dishes?
- Should equipment be wrapped in food safe plastic bags during transport?
- Other ideas?

Home Preparation

- We are working hard to find kitchen facilities for every site. Currently, where no kitchen is available the nutrition assistants are preparing food at home. In addition to adding to the time our food is “out of temperature” each household environment is different. Should we continue to allow home preparation?
- What about pets or smokers in the household?
- What should be done if one or more of the children in the household are sick?
- Should private homes become part of the site visit to ensure public safety?

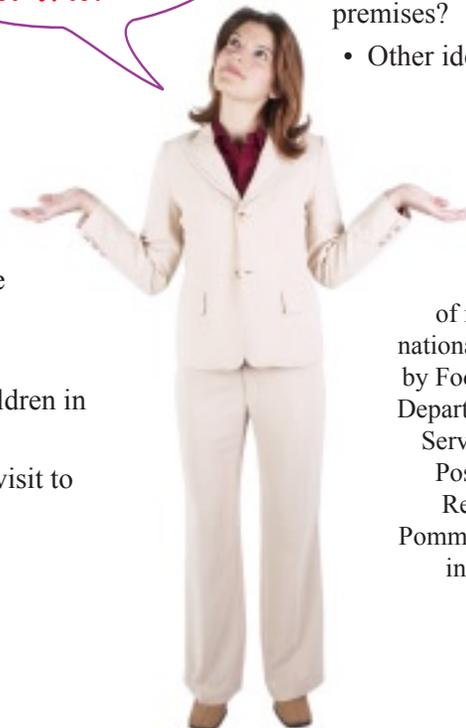
Classroom Food Safety

- Should we consider using disposable cutting boards?
- Is it reasonable to have a small wash bucket filled with sanitizing solution available during class?
- What can we do to ensure that we are not cross-contaminating foods?
- Should we model the use of food thermometers during the class?
- Should we use food-handling gloves for participants assisting with the food preparation?
- Should we “model” a sanitizing dip during dish washing at the site?
- Other ideas?

Food Storage

- Our food storage practices are inconsistent from site to site. What can be done to standardize dry goods storage?
- Some sites do not have an office refrigerator to store perishable foods. Should these sites be limited to recipes that do not contain any perishable foods?
 - Should any leftover foods be given to class participants even though we do not know how the food will be handled once it leaves the premises?
 - Other ideas?

Isn't there some kind of protocol for this?



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