

Serving Safe Food in Child Care

Protecting children from foodborne illness is one of the most important jobs of child care providers. Foodborne illness is defined as illness caused by eating contaminated food or drink. Symptoms of foodborne illness may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever.

Although anyone can become sick from eating contaminated food, infants and young children have a higher risk of foodborne illness. This is because their immune systems are still maturing.

Practices for preventing contamination of food can greatly reduce the risk of foodborne illness. This Mealtime Memo focuses on four key concepts for keeping food safe in child care.

1. Clean

Cleanliness is very important in keeping food safe. Keeping a facility clean requires good personal hygiene practices. It also requires proper cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces, dishes, and equipment.

2. Separate

Cross contamination occurs when one surface contaminates another. Separating hazards from foods prevents cross-contamination—for example, separating raw foods from cooked foods. Another example is storing chemicals in a separate location from food.



There are four key ways food can become contaminated.

1. Hand-to-food contamination
2. Food-to-food contamination
3. Equipment/food contact surface-to-food contamination
4. Chemical-to-food contamination



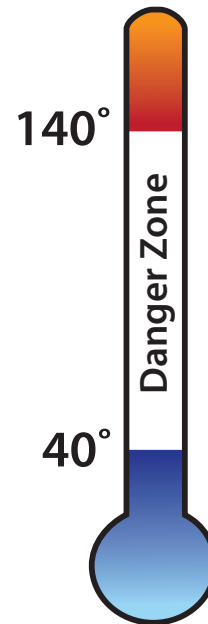
3. Cook

One important way to prevent foodborne illness is controlling time and temperature. The goal is to limit the time foods spend in the temperature danger zone. The temperature danger zone ranges from 40 °F–140 °F. Within this range, bacteria multiply more quickly.

Cooking foods to the correct internal temperature will destroy existing bacteria, even though it may not kill toxins or bacterial spores. The key to cooking is to reach recommended temperatures within the appropriate time frame.

There are four key temperatures in child care.

- 140 °F Ready-to-eat foods taken from a commercially processed, hermetically sealed package; vegetables (frozen or canned); precooked ham (to reheat)
- 145 °F Fresh beef, pork, veal, or lamb
- 160 °F Ground meats, such as hamburger, ground pork, or sausage; egg dishes; fresh pork; fresh ham (labeled: cook before eating)
- 165 °F Poultry, stuffing, ground turkey, chicken, casseroles, or leftovers



Check temperatures with appropriate thermometers. Be sure to calibrate your thermometers regularly. Hold food in holding cabinets or insulated containers at 140 °F or above to keep it out of the temperature danger zone after cooking.

4. Chill

Proper chilling of foods also helps keep them out of the temperature danger zone. Chilling foods is important at several steps in handling foods: receiving, storing, preparing, and cold holding.

Standard Operating Procedures

Food safety standard operating procedures are important for protecting the safety of food. Written procedures provide guidance in how to keep food safe, tell how to document food safety practices, and explain what to do if procedures are not followed. Regularly training employees on how to use the standard operating procedures helps ensure they are carried out.

For more information about personal hygiene and cleaning; preventing contamination of foods; cooking foods, using and calibrating thermometers, and reheating leftovers; temperature danger zone in storage, preparation, and holding; and food safety standard operating procedures; see fact sheets available at www.nfsmi.org.

Recipe to Try

Children will enjoy this tasty Taco Salad.

Taco Salad E-13¹

Raw ground beef (no more than 20% fat)	3 lb 3 oz	Ground cumin	2 ¼ tsp
Fresh onions, chopped	¼ cup 3 Tbsp	Paprika	¾ tsp
OR	OR	Onion powder	¾ tsp
Dehydrated onions	¼ cup	Fresh lettuce, shredded	2 lb
Salt	1 Tbsp	Fresh tomatoes, diced, chilled	2 cups
Granulated garlic	2 ¼ tsp	Enriched taco shell pieces	1 lb 6 ½ oz
Ground black or white pepper	1 tsp	OR	OR
Canned tomato paste	¾ cup 1 ½ tsp	Enriched tostada shells (at least 0.9 oz each)	25
Water	2 ½ cups	Reduced fat Cheddar cheese, shredded	3 ¼ cups
Chili powder	1 Tbsp		

Brown ground beef. Drain. Continue immediately.

Add onions, salt, granulated garlic, pepper, tomato paste, water, chili powder, cumin, paprika, and onion powder. Blend well. Bring to boil. Reduce heat. Simmer for 25–30 minutes.

CCP: Heat to 160 °F or higher for 15 seconds

CCP: Hold for hot service at 140 °F or higher.

Combine lettuce and tomatoes. Toss lightly. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Portion is 1 salad.



Serving suggestions:

A. Assemble each salad as follows, or in preferred order:

1st layer: at least 0.9 oz (approximately ½ cup) taco shell pieces or 1 tostada shell

2nd layer: 1 ¾ oz (approximately ¾ cup) lettuce and tomato mixture

3rd layer: No.12 scoop (½ cup) meat mixture

4th layer: ½ oz (2 Tbsp) shredded cheese

OR

B. (1) Pre-portion 1 ¾ oz (approximately ¾ cup) lettuce and tomato mixture and ½ oz (2 Tbsp) shredded cheese into individual soufflé cups. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

(2) Transfer meat mixture and taco shell pieces or tostada shells into pans. Serve at least 0.9 oz (approximately ½ cup) taco shell pieces or 1 tostada shell. Top with No.12 scoop (½ cup) meat mixture. Add 1 pre-portioned soufflé cup of lettuce and tomato mixture and 1 pre-portioned soufflé cup of shredded cheese. Instruct children how to “build” their own taco salad.

Number of servings: 25

Serving size: 1 salad provides the equivalent of 2 oz of cooked lean meat, ¾ cup of vegetable, and the equivalent of 1 slice of bread

¹USDA Recipes for Child Care. Available online at www.nfsmi.org.

Mealtime Memo FOR CHILD CARE

Breakfast Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
½ cup strawberries (½ cup fruit) ¼ cup oatmeal (¼ cup cooked cereal) ¾ cup milk (¾ cup milk)	½ cup mixed fruit in light syrup (½ cup fruit) ½ cup unsweetened whole-grain cereal variety (½ cup dry cereal) ¾ cup milk (¾ cup milk)	½ cup diced pears (½ cup fruit) 1 Oven-Baked Pancake A-06 ¹ (½ slice bread) ¾ cup milk (¾ cup milk)	½ cup banana slices (½ cup fruit) ½ slice whole wheat toast (½ slice bread) ¾ cup milk (¾ cup milk)	½ cup apple slices (½ cup fruit) 1 Oatmeal Muffin Square (A-16 ¹) (1 slice bread) ¾ cup milk (¾ cup milk)

Lunch Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
½ grilled cheese sandwich (1 ½ oz cooked lean meat, 1 slice bread) ¼ cup carrot sticks (¼ cup vegetable) ¼ cup sliced apples (¼ cup fruit) ¾ cup milk (¾ cup milk)	1 serving Taco Salad E-13 ¹ (2 oz cooked lean meat, ¾ cup vegetable, 1 slice bread) ¾ cup milk (¾ cup milk)	1 piece Pizza with Cheese Topping D-23A ¹ (1 ½ oz cheese, ½ cup vegetable, 1 ½ slices bread) ¼ cup pear slices (¼ cup fruit) ¼ cup cup shredded lettuce and carrots with Ranch Dressing E-18 ¹ (¼ cup vegetable) ¾ cup milk (¾ cup milk)	1 piece Chicken Pot Pie D-11 ¹ (1 ½ oz cooked lean meat, ¼ cup vegetables, 1 ¾ slices bread) ¼ cup pineapple tidbits (¼ cup fruit) ¾ cup milk (¾ cup milk)	1 Tortilla Roll-Up F-07 ¹ (1 ½ oz cooked lean meat, 1 slice bread) ¼ cup steamed broccoli and cauliflower (¼ cup vegetable) ¼ cup Waldorf Fruit Salad E-14 ¹ (¼ cup fruit) ¾ cup milk (¾ cup milk)

Snack Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
½ whole-grain English muffin with ½ oz melted cheddar cheese (1 slice bread, ½ oz cheese) Water ²	2 oz lowfat yogurt (2 oz yogurt) ½ cup diced peaches (½ cup fruit) Water ²	1 Blueberry Muffin A-03 ¹ (1 ½ slice bread) ½ cup milk (½ cup milk) Water ²	½ cup broccoli florets ³ with Ranch Dressing E-18 ¹ (½ cup vegetable) ½ oz wheat crackers (4 crackers) (½ oz grains/bread) Water ²	½ cup apricot halves (½ cup fruit) ½ oz graham crackers (2 crackers) (½ oz grains/bread) Water ²

¹USDA Recipes for Child Care. Available online at www.nfsmi.org. Ages 3–5.

²Water is suggested as a beverage for all snacks even when other beverages are offered to encourage children to drink water.

³Lightly steaming broccoli may make it easier to eat for small children.

Mealttime Memo FOR CHILD CARE

Sources

- National Food Service Management Institute. (2009). *Serving safe food in child care: Trainer's guide*. University, MS: Author.
- National Food Service Management Institute. (2004). *Wash Your Hands: Educating the School Community*. University, MS: National Food Service Management Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=118>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service. (2008). *Kitchen companion: Your safe food handbook*. Retrieved from www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Kitchen_Companion.pdf
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Resources

For additional training, see the National Food Service Management Institute's *Serving Safe Food in Child Care* online course. www.nfsmi.org.

Subscribe to *Mealttime Memo for Child Care* online at www.nfsmi.org and receive the link to download the newsletter via e-mail each month!!

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