SAFE FOOD HANDLING-Food Safety Fact Sheet #4

“Handling Ready to Eat Foods”

Background Information

Ready-to-eat foods are foods that are edible without washing, cooking, or additional preparation by the food handler and are reasonably expected to be consumed in that form. Ready-to-eat food includes: potentially hazardous food that is unpackaged and cooked to the temperature and time required for the specific food; raw, washed, cut fruits and vegetables; whole, raw fruits and vegetables that are presented for consumption without the need for further washing, such as at a buffet; and other food presented for consumption for which further washing or cooking is not required and from which rinds, peels, husks, or shells are removed. Cross-contamination from hands to foods is one of the leading causes of the spread of pathogenic organisms that lead to human illnesses. The avoidance of direct hand contact with ready-to-eat foods is one way to protect the food from contamination.

Key Concepts

Arizona State Health Code states that there should be no bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods.

Physical barriers are required when handling ready-to-eat foods.

Acceptable means of handling ready-to-eat foods include using:

- Deli tissue
- Tongs
- Spatulas
- Dispensing Equipment
- Non-latex single-use gloves

Gloves and other barriers do not replace handwashing. Always wash your hands before putting gloves on and when changing to a new pair.

You should change gloves at the following times:

- As soon as they become soiled or torn.
- Before beginning a different task.
- After handling raw meat, fish, or poultry and before handling ready-to-eat food.

Never wash and reuse gloves.

Latex gloves should not be used, since allergens from the gloves may transfer to food and cause an allergic reaction in some individuals.
**ACTIVITY 1**

Check the foods that should not be touched with bare hands.

___ sandwiches ___ ground beef to be cooked  
___ rolls and baked goods ___ shredded cheese for salads  
___ raw chicken ___ pizza toppings  
___ ice ___ whole potatoes to be mashed  
___ sliced apples on a buffet ___ cold lunch meats  
___ garnishes such as lemon slices ___ raw steak to be grilled

**ACTIVITY 2**

True or False

1. ___ Gloves may be reused if they are properly washed.
2. ___ Latex gloves are not allowed because some people are allergic to them.
3. ___ Tongs or spatulas are acceptable to use in place of gloves.
4. ___ Ready-to-eat foods include raw meats that will be cooked.
5. ___ A deli worker making fresh sandwiches for sale should wear gloves or use deli tissue or tongs to prevent contact with the sandwich ingredients.
6. ___ When changing gloves to a fresh pair, it is not necessary to wash your hands.
7. ___ Cross-contamination from hands to foods is a major cause of foodborne illness.

**ACTIVITY 3-MANAGER WILL DEMONSTRATE PROPER GLOVE USE-PUTTING ON AND REMOVING GLOVES**

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ANSWER KEY

Activity 1

Foods that should be checked that should not be handled by bare hands: sandwiches, rolls and baked goods, ice, sliced apples on a buffet, garnishes such as lemon slices, shredded cheese for salads, and cold lunch meats

Activity 2


Activity 3

Manager should demonstrate how to put on gloves correctly and how to remove them correctly.

REFERENCES


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