

**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.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> sandwiches                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ground beef to be cooked    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rolls and baked goods          | <input type="checkbox"/> shredded cheese for salads  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> raw chicken                    | <input type="checkbox"/> pizza toppings              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ice                            | <input type="checkbox"/> whole potatoes to be mashed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sliced apples on a buffet      | <input type="checkbox"/> cold lunch meats            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> garnishes such as lemon slices | <input type="checkbox"/> 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**

## **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**

1. F 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. F 7. T

### **Activity 3**

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

## **REFERENCES**

AZ State Health Code. [http://www.co.cochise.az.us/health/EnvHealth/food\\_doc.pdf](http://www.co.cochise.az.us/health/EnvHealth/food_doc.pdf) 2001.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Fact sheets. 4300 Cherry Creek Drive South Denver, Colorado 80246 <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/> 2000.

FDA Food Code. <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~dms/foodcode.html> 2005.

King County, WA, Public Health Department.

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/foodsafety.aspx> Seattle, Washington. 2004

Michigan Food Law. [http://www.michigan.gov/mda/1,1607,7-125-1568\\_2387\\_2435---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mda/1,1607,7-125-1568_2387_2435---,00.html) 2000.

National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. <http://www.nraef.org/> 2008

Prepared by Lori Brandman, Program Coordinator, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, February, 2009