



Mealtime Memo

for Child Care

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It's Cleaning Time: Tips for Cleaning in the Child Care Kitchen

Maintaining a clean kitchen is one of the most essential ways for keeping food safe in child care. A clean kitchen reduces the risk of injury, foodborne illness, and other infectious diseases. For example, stacked dirty dishes on a countertop can fall onto staff, potentially causing injury. In addition, dirty dishes are ideal sources for bacteria to grow at rapid speeds, which can later cause a foodborne illness outbreak among staff and children.

Understanding the risk, it is important to properly clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces, dishes, and equipment in the child care kitchen on a daily basis.

The first step to any cleaning process is handwashing. Proper

handwashing is one of the most important ways for preventing the spread of germs. As you begin, always wash your hands with soap and warm water. Vigorously scrub all areas of your hands for at least 20 seconds before rinsing. After drying your hands with a paper towel, avoid re-contaminating them by turning off the water faucet with a paper towel. Then, dispose of the paper towel with a foot-operated trashcan.



As you may know, there are two methods for washing dishes,

manually and mechanical. It is important to properly use each method to ensure dishes are safe to use for the next meal service. When manually washing dishes in a three-compartment sink, always complete the entire process: wash,

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rinse, and sanitize. Follow the directions of the cleaning agent of your choice, such as detergent or solvents, and ensure the wash water temperature is at least 110 °F. After washing and rinsing, sanitize the dishes with hot water for at least 30 seconds at 171 °F or higher, or use a chemical sanitizer. If sanitizing the dishes with a chemical sanitizer, always read the directions on the label to obtain the correct concentration.

When mechanically washing dishes in a dishmachine, use a machine that sanitizes with heat or chemicals. If your dishmachine uses hot water to sanitize, always check the temperature gauge to confirm the food contact surfaces reaches 160 °F or higher. As a secondary check, use a heat sensitive tape or maximum registering thermometer for ensuring appropriate temperatures are reached for sanitizing.

Most child care kitchens have small and large equipment, such as blenders and ovens. It is important to clean and sanitize all equipment after each use and confirm it is in proper working order. When cleaning equipment, use disposable paper towels or clean cleaning cloths. However, cleaning cloths can be the source of cross-contamination when not properly handled. The best way to reduce the risk of cross-contamination is to avoid using the same cleaning cloths during other tasks, such as wiping spills or washing dishes. In between uses of cleaning equipment, place the moist cleaning cloths in a bucket with sanitizing solution. However, when the sanitizing solution appears cloudy or the cleaning cloth appears dirty, prepare a fresh sanitizing solution and use a clean cleaning cloth. At the end of each day, wash, dry, and store all used cleaning cloths in a covered container.

As you continue to clean the kitchen, be sure to address the following areas:

- Clean all food service and eating areas with clean cleaning cloths and hot soapy water. Then, sanitize with a sanitizing solution. If using a bleach and water solution, follow the instructions on the product label for proper concentration. After each use, allow all food service and eating areas to air dry.
- Clean countertops after each use, and clean and sanitize at the end of each day.
- Clean walls and windows as necessary to remove splatters, grease, and handprints.
- Clean and sanitize tables and highchair trays before and after each use.
- Wash all cloth napkins, tablecloths, placemats, dishcloths, and potholders after each use.
- Clean shelves, cabinets, and drawers as necessary, especially the handles.
- Take garbage out daily and clean trashcans as necessary.
- Clean the refrigerator on a monthly basis or more often as needed.

While cleaning the kitchen may seem like a chore, it is the best way to protect the children in your care, other child care staff, and everyone working in the child care kitchen. Remember, always check with your local and state regulatory agencies for the latest sanitation requirements for your child care program. For additional information on cleaning, checkout *Care for Our Children's Routine Schedule for Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting* at <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/WebFiles/AppendicesUpload/AppendixK.pdf>.



Vegetable of the Month: Pumpkin

Pumpkins are a squash plant native to North America. They are fat free and cholesterol free. Pumpkins provide an excellent source of vitamin A and a good source of vitamin C. When purchasing pumpkins, select pumpkins that are firm and heavy for their size. You can store pumpkins in a cool, dark place for up to two months. Introduce pumpkins to children in a fun and tasty way. For a festive fall treat, add pumpkin puree to your favorite apple-bran muffin recipe.

Nutrition Fact

What does it mean when a food package lists low sodium on the label? A low sodium product has less than 140 mg of sodium or 5% of the Daily Value (DV). Increased intake of sodium has been linked to high blood pressure, which increases the risk for heart disease. When possible choose foods with low or reduced sodium. Remove added salt from recipes by using herbs, no-salt spice mixes, lemon or orange zest, or 100% fruits juices to flavor recipes. Drain and rinse canned, precooked vegetables to remove excess sodium. Remember to use fresh foods when possible, because they are generally lower in sodium than processed foods.

Nutrition Tip

Do you use cycle menus in your child care program? Cycle menus are planned for a period and then repeated. Using healthy cycle menus is a great way to offer children balanced meals on a regular basis. They can help you save time and money because you know exactly what you need during the cycle. Cycle menus can also be used to incorporate seasonal fruits and vegetables. For example, during the fall months you can easily incorporate seasonal items such as acorn squash, pumpkin, and sweet potatoes. Check out the National Food Service Management Institute's Cycle Menus at <http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=196> when planning your cycle menu.



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This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with the National Food Service Management Institute at The University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government. The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.

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