

SAFE FOOD HANDLING

AIM:

To minimise transmission of food borne illness in children using Family Day Care, by utilising food hygiene and safe food handling practices.

RATIONALE:

Food borne illness commonly occurs in settings where food is prepared or served to a number of people, and types of illness include bacterial and viral gastroenteritis, food poisoning from toxin producing bacterial contamination, and potentially serious infections such as hepatitis A, salmonella, shigella, and shiga-like toxin producing *escherichia coli*.

PRACTICES:

To minimise transmission of food borne illness in children, educators should:

- have a designated area for food preparation and storage, and for preparation of bottles, which is safe and hygienic.
- store cooked and uncooked meat on separate shelves in the fridge, with uncooked meats on the lowest shelf and separate from other foods.
- have facilities that include a stove or microwave oven, sink, refrigerator, suitable waste disposal, and a hot water supply.
- ensure all food or bottle preparation and food storage areas are separate from nappy change and toileting areas.
- If preparing or serving food, educators will:
 1. wash hands before and after handling food or utensils
 2. wash hands after:
 - * using the toilet
 - * having contact with unclean equipment and work surfaces, soiled clothing and dish cloths,
 - * toileting children, wiping children's noses or their own noses, removing gloves.
 3. avoid direct touching of ready to eat food by following proper food handling techniques and using clean implements.
 4. advise the scheme of any gastrointestinal illness that is present within the household.
 5. not prepare food while suffering from any gastrointestinal illness until at least one full day after recovery.
 6. wear gloves if you have broken skin/cuts etc on hands.
 7. not prepare food if you have a hand infection that cannot be isolated from the food.
- When involved in food preparation and nappy changing or toileting, use principles of infection control and safe food handling, particularly hand washing and using gloves for changing nappies.

The '4-hour/2-hour rule'

The 4-hour/2-hour rule provides guidelines regarding the safety of food when it has not been stored under 5°C or over 60°C.

Ready-to-eat food that has been at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C:

- for a total of less than 2 hours, must be refrigerated or used immediately (do not reheat milk/formula).
- for a total of longer than 2 hours but less than 4 hours, must be used immediately.
- for a total of 4 hours or longer, must be thrown out.

- Clean food preparation and serving areas after each use. For cleaning food contact surfaces and utensils, use neutral detergent and water to remove visible contamination such as food waste, dirt and grease.
- Be aware of and accommodate the special needs of culturally diverse families in relation to special rules for storing, preparing and serving foods such as halal and kosher food :
 - * halal and kosher food can be stored or refrigerated in separate and sealed containers,
 - * ask families about any special requirements for storing, preparing and serving foods, and ask them for preferred recipes,
 - * utilise resources such as the halal helpline, relevant websites or by requesting resources and information from the scheme staff.

Ensure microwave food safety by:

1. being aware that microwaves are useful for defrosting, cooking and re-heating foods, however food borne disease can also result if the usual rules of food safety are not followed. Defrosting in a microwave also partially cooks the food and makes an ideal medium for growth of bacteria.

2. Using a microwave oven appropriately:

- use only microwave safe dishes, utensils and wrap,
- defrost foods only if you are planning to cook the food immediately after it has thawed,
- use microwave safe dishes for defrosting foods, and cover with microwave plastic wrap or microwave safe covers,
- as different food items defrost, remove them and avoid cross contamination or mixing of food juices,
- be careful when removing food or liquids from the microwave and removing the plastic wrap as food and liquid continues to cook for some time and you can burn yourself on escaping steam or boiling liquid,
- food that has been cooked or reheated in a microwave and is not going to be consumed immediately should be placed in the refrigerator for cooling, not left on the bench to cool,
- it is best practice for leftover food which has been reheated and not consumed, to be discarded,
- rotate and mix foods at intervals to ensure they are cooked through evenly,
- when re-heating foods such as casseroles the liquid should be stirred every 3 - 5 minutes to ensure it is evenly heated through,
- clean the microwave if food is splattered inside.

Use the following principles in preparing infants' bottle feeds:

1. Store bottles of milk in the refrigerator, do not store in the door of the refrigerator.
2. Use only sterilised bottles and teat assemblies for all infant feeds.
3. Wash hands before preparing or handling expressed milk or formula.
4. Prepare formula strictly according to instructions on the container.

5. Do not use a microwave for heating expressed breast milk, formula milk, or any bottled milk or fluid, as resulting temperatures may be a burns risk to children.

Microwave ovens used for heating babies' or young children's milk or food can cause scalds to the mouth that need extensive medical attention and may create permanent long term medical problems.

*According to NSW Dept. Health, breast milk and infant formula do not have to be warmed before feeding. Often, infants prefer to drink milk at room temperature. The best and safest way to warm bottles is by standing the bottle in warm water. **It is not recommended to heat bottles in the microwave oven.** Specially designed bottle warmers are also available. Test heated milk or water until it is warm to touch when sprinkled onto your wrist. While the bottle is warming remember to place the **hot** container in the sink or a safe place where children cannot access it.*

6. Warm bottles by standing in warm/hot water, in a position inaccessible to children.
7. Warm infant milk only once.
8. Test the temperature of the milk on your wrist before giving it to the baby.
9. Discard any unused infant milk leftover after each feed or that has not been consumed by the infant after 30 minutes.
10. Avoid bottle feeding infants when they are lying down.

For sterilising bottles and teats:

- * wash first in detergent and water and rinse with water,
- * if using a microwave, use purpose designed containers,
- * if using a microwave or other sterilising device, use in accordance with manufacturer's instructions,
- * if using a cold water steriliser, use and dilute according to manufacturer's instructions and store securely out of access by children when not in use.

Use the following guidelines in relation to bottled breast milk:

- * ensure bottled breast milk is always labelled with the child's name, mother's name and the date it is expressed,
- * breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator for 48 hours and in a deep freezer for up to 3 months,
- * frozen breast milk can be thawed by placing in either cool or warm water, don't put in boiling water as the milk will curdle, and shake the bottle if the fats and milk have separated,
- * thaw under running water, start with cold water then increasingly warm water and test the temperature of the milk on your wrist before giving it to the baby,
- * throw away any unused breast milk, do not refrigerate or refreeze breast milk once it has been thawed or heated.

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ), *Food Safety Fact Sheets* are available at: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au>, and provide comprehensive guidelines on food safety and management of a food business, for example: - Food Handling Skills and Knowledge - Health and Hygiene: Receiving Food Safely - Thermometers and using them with Potentially Hazardous Food - Thermometer Control Requirements - Cool and Reheat Food Safely- to the right temperatures - Store, Display and Transport Food at the Right Temperature

Information on preparing bottle feeds can be found in the **Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia incorporating the Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers**, NHRC 2003.

Information on breastfeeding can be obtained from **Australian Breastfeeding Association** at <http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au>.

Relevant Legislation: *Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011; Work Health and Safety Act 2011; Food Act 1989 (NSW);*

Key Resources: *Caring for Children: Food, Nutrition and Fun Activities*, Bunney & Williams, 3rd edition, 1996; FSANZ Food Standards Code - Chapter 3 - *Food Safety Standards*; Food Safety Fact Sheets, FSANZ at: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au>
Safe Food Australia, ANZFA, 2001;
Microwave Food Safety, Queensland Health, 2002 at: www.health.qld.gov.au
Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia Incorporating the Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers, NHIVIRC, 2003;
Australian Breastfeeding Association, at: www.breastfeeding.asn.au