

## **Feed Them Safely - Guidance on Food Hygiene and Infection Control for Childminders and Nurseries**

This guidance has been produced to provide information for childminders and those operating nurseries on the requirements of current food hygiene legislation, and to outline some good hygienic practices. Please note the guidance is aimed only at childminders and nurseries operating in the Eden District Council area. Although dealing primarily with food hygiene, some health and safety advice has been included. Please note that the Health and Safety Executive may be the enforcing authority where childminders work from home, or nurseries are linked to schools on school sites.

### **Further Information**

Further information on food hygiene and safety is available from the Food, Health and Safety Section. See contact details at the end of this document.

### **Planning**

If you are thinking of starting a childminding or nursery business, you should contact the Development Control Officers in Planning Services, telephone (01768) 817817 for advice on any required planning consents.

### **Registration as a Food Business**

#### **Nurseries and pre- schools**

Nurseries that provide food and/or snacks for children in their care must register as a food business at least 28 days before opening. There is no fee to register and a registration form is available on request or on line at the Council's website.

#### **Childminders**

If you provide food with your childminding business, the details you provide to Ofsted will also be used to register you as a food business. Your registration details will be available to your local authority and you will not have to register separately as a food business.

You may have a food safety inspection after being registered as a food business. If your childminding business does need an inspection, a food safety officer will contact you to arrange a suitable time to visit. The officer will talk about food hygiene and food safety to help make sure the food you give to any children is prepared, stored and handled safely.

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## Introduction

It is estimated that there are about four times as many incidents of food poisoning resulting from food prepared in the home than there are from food prepared in commercial premises such as restaurants, hotels and takeaways.

As anyone who has suffered from food poisoning will tell you, it's not a pleasant experience. At best it may mean spending a few days in bed with symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, fever, headaches and nausea. At worst, food poisoning can be fatal.

It is the responsibility of every food business to make sure that the food they provide is fit to eat

What you may not realise is that, as a childminder, if you provide food for the children you look after you are running a food business.

This means you are required to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regs 2013 and Regulation (EC) No 852/2004. Food Safety Enforcement Officers from the local Council may, at any reasonable time, inspect the parts of your house used to store or prepare food.

This booklet is designed to help you comply with the Regulations, and, more importantly, take the necessary steps to ensure the food you serve is safe to eat.

### **Please note:**

**This booklet is provided for information only and should not be regarded as a statement of the law.**

## Buying Food

- Always buy food from reputable suppliers.
- Check deliveries of food straightaway to ensure food is in date, in good condition and that chilled/frozen foods are at the correct temperature
- Especially in warm weather, use a cool box or cool bag to carry home high risk foods (foods that need refrigeration).
- Use ice packs in the cool box/bag to help keep food cool.
- Make sure raw food and foods which are ready to eat, are properly wrapped in shopping bags. Wherever possible put them in separate bags.
- Try to buy chilled and frozen foods last.
- After buying chilled or frozen foods take them home without delay.

## Storing Food

- If parents bring made-up bottles of formula, put them in the fridge straight away. Keep them in the fridge until you are ready to use them. Use the formula within 24 hours
- Store raw meat and poultry in covered containers at the bottom of the fridge to avoid any risk of juices dripping onto foods which are ready to eat.
- Always keep eggs in the fridge.
- Do not store opened cans of food in the fridge. Put the contents into a suitable container such as a covered plastic bowl before refrigerating.
- Regularly check your fridge to make sure it is working properly (0 to 5°C). A simple thermometer kept in the fridge will make this easier.
- Defrost the fridge regularly.
- Never overload your fridge. They work best when air can circulate around the food.
- Never leave the fridge door open longer than necessary.
- Wash fridges down with hot soapy water followed by a disinfectant cleaner. Rinse and allow to dry before replacing the food.
- Fridges only slow down the growth of harmful germs - they do not kill them!
- Keep all stored food covered to stop them being contaminated and to prevent insects and other pests getting in.
- Regularly clean out food cupboards as spillages can harbour germs.

## Preparing Food

- Always wash your hands thoroughly before preparing food. An anti-bacterial soap is recommended.
- Regularly clean and disinfect work surfaces and equipment. A disinfectant cleaner will help kill germs and prevent cross contamination
- Clean work surfaces and spillages as you go.
- You should clean and sterilise bottles and teats before you use them.
- Ideally, you should make up formula milk freshly for each feed. If there is any made-up formula milk left after a feed, throw it away.
- Boil fresh tap water and let it cool, but for no more than half an hour. Always put the boiled water in the bottle first, before the powder.
- Cool the formula quickly to feeding temperature by holding the bottle under cold running water (with the cap on).

- Prepare raw and ready to eat foods separately.
- Wherever possible use different chopping boards and knives (ideally colour coded) to keep raw foods such as meat and poultry separate from ready to eat foods
- Thoroughly defrost meat, poultry and fish before cooking.
- Keep pets out of the kitchen - they carry disease.
- Do not use foods after their “use-by” date.

## **Cooking Food**

- Make sure food is cooked thoroughly until it is piping hot right through to the middle. Burgers, sausages etc should be cooked until the juices run clear and there are no pink bits inside.
- Always follow cooking instructions on packaging carefully
- Never dip your fingers in food to taste. Always use a clean spoon

## **General Advice**

- Do not give honey to children under one year old. Very occasionally, honey can contain a type of harmful bacteria that can produce toxins in a baby’s intestines and this can cause serious illness.
- Food which is to be eaten cold should be cooled as quickly as possible after cooking (within 1½ hours) and then refrigerated until used.
- Never put hot foods straight into the fridge.
- Take extra care when “warming up” left overs. It is best not to use them at all. If you do, make sure they are piping hot right through to the middle. Never heat up leftovers more than once.
- If you wish to serve runny eggs current advice is that this is acceptable so long as the eggs are Lion marked.
- Dish cloths can carry millions of germs which can then be spread around the kitchen when the cloth is used.

Always use a clean, preferably disposable cloth to wipe worktops and equipment.

Make sure cloths are thoroughly washed, disinfected and dried between tasks.

It is important to also wash and disinfect tea towels and oven gloves regularly.

Ideally, wash kitchen textiles separately in a machine on a hot cycle of 90°C. This will disinfect them. Or if you wash them by hand, make sure all the food and dirt has been removed by washing in hot soapy water before disinfecting them.

- Always wash your hands before preparing food, after handling raw food, before handling ready to eat food, after handling pets and visiting the toilet.
- Never dry your hands on tea towels - use separate (preferably disposable) hand towels.
- Cuts and burns should be covered with waterproof dressings.
- Raw vegetables and meat both carry harmful germs and both are often cleaned and prepared in and around the sink. It is therefore important that the sink and surrounding area are cleaned and disinfected regularly.

## **Infection Control**

Food poisoning and other infectious illnesses can take many forms and be caused by several different kinds of germs. It is vital that if you, or any of the children you are responsible for, develop food poisoning-like symptoms you know what action to take.

Food poisoning symptoms include:

Diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, fever, nausea, and headaches.

### **When children are ill**

- Seek medical advice. This is particularly important in the case of young children.
- Exclude sick children from childcare settings until at least 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped
- Clean and disinfect soiling accidents on floors and other hard surfaces.
- Wash hands thoroughly after taking children to the toilet and after changing nappies.
- Toilets and potties should be disinfected after use.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning up.

### **When you are ill**

- Do not try to look after children if you are ill with the above symptoms.
- Do not prepare food until at least 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped

**If you are in any doubt seek medical advice or contact the Food, Health and Safety team. Contact details are at the end of this document.**

## **Food Allergy and Intolerance**

Food allergy and food intolerance are both types of food sensitivity. When someone has a food allergy, their immune system reacts to a particular food as if it isn't safe. If someone has a severe food allergy, this can cause a life-threatening reaction.

Food intolerance doesn't involve the immune system and is generally not life-threatening. But if someone eats a food they are intolerant to, this could make them feel ill or affect their long-term health. Requesting information from parents/guardians about any food allergies /intolerances which their children have is vital, so that only appropriate foods are given.

In theory, any food can cause a food allergy, but in fact just a small number of foods are to blame for 90% of allergic reactions to food in the UK. The 14 allergens are: celery; cereals containing gluten; crustaceans; eggs; fish; lupin; milk; molluscs; mustard; nuts; peanuts; sesame seeds; soya and sulphur dioxide.

Food labelling rules require pre-packed food sold in the UK or the rest of the European Union (EU) to show clearly on the label if it contains one of the fourteen allergens stated above.

It is essential to look carefully at the label on any pre-packed food you buy if you are buying food for someone who has an allergy or intolerance. Even if you have bought the product before, you should still check the label as the recipe might have changed.

All food businesses serving loose foods must now be able to supply accurate information about menu items that contain any of the 14 allergens listed above and contained in the Food Information Regulations. These rules enable people to avoid the most common allergens. However, some people are sensitive to foods that are not recognised as common allergens, so always check the ingredients carefully.

It is also important to consider the potential for cross contamination of allergens within your business, if one or more children in your care has a food allergy.

## **Training**

The law requires that food handlers receive supervision, instruction and/or training to a level which is suitable for the job they do.

You must, at the very least, be aware of, and understand the principles of food hygiene and the safe handling of food.

Many childminders have found attending short basic food hygiene courses run by education establishments and private training companies have helped them get a clearer understanding of safe food handling practices.

## **Food Safety Management Procedures**

Current food safety legislation requires food business operators to have food safety management procedures based upon the principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point). These procedures must be in writing but how food businesses meet this requirement will depend upon their size and the nature of the business, for example, whether the food products they handle are high risk or not. Many small childminding (and nursery) businesses will only need a very simple system.

### **What do I need to do?**

Your food safety management system will need to focus on identifying where food safety problems could arise and putting steps in place to prevent things going wrong. As mentioned above, the regulations say that the system must be based upon “Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point” (HACCP) principles. A HACCP system identifies the critical points in the various stages of a food operation where problems or “hazards” might occur and puts “controls” in place to prevent anything going wrong.

You do not have to use any specific type of food safety management system, but the system you choose must be a written one. Any system, provided it covers all aspects of your food operation and is designed to ensure that the food you produce is safe to eat will comply.

For instance, you could use the Government’s Safer Food Better Business pack. There is one specifically for childminders or there is a pack for caterers which may be suitable for nurseries:

You can download these packs free of charge from the Food Standards Agency’s website.

Whatever system you use, remember it has to identify all the things that could go wrong and what you do to stop that.

If you would like to discuss how this might apply to your individual circumstances, please contact the Food, Health and Safety Team. (Details at the end of this documents)

### **What sort of things do I need to think about?**

#### **The Hazards:**

There are three main types of hazards:

- Microbiological
- Chemical
- Physical

#### **The following microbiological hazards are common to most businesses:**

- Survival of harmful bacteria due to inadequate cooking



- Harmful bacteria may multiply **if** chilled high risk foods such as cooked meat and dairy products are not kept cold enough
- Harmful bacteria may multiply **if** frozen food starts to defrost
- Harmful bacteria may multiply **if** hot foods are not kept hot enough
- Harmful bacteria may multiply **if** cooling of high risk foods takes too long
- Harmful bacteria may multiply **if** reheating of high risk foods is not thorough or takes too long
- Harmful bacteria may multiply **if** high risk food is kept too long

### **The following hazards apply at most steps**

- Bacterial and physical contamination of food by bacteria, dirt, hair and jewellery etc from people and clothing
- Bacterial and physical contamination of food by bacteria and debris from dirty surfaces and equipment or by loose/broken pieces of equipment or structure
- Bacterial and physical contamination of food from rodents, crawling and flying insects
- Bacterial contamination of high risk food by raw food
- Bacterial, physical and chemical contamination of food from packaging, chemicals, cleaning equipment, refuse and pets
- Bacterial, physical and chemical contamination of food by soil and other contaminants.

### **The controls:**

Controls must be effective; they should either remove the hazard completely or reduce it to a safe level. They should be practical, easy to carry out and all staff should understand what to do and why they need to implement the controls.

Examples of common controls (there may be others you need to implement) are:

- Buying supplies from reputable suppliers
- Checking food deliveries on arrival
- Good stock rotation of food and ingredients
- Storing food at the correct temperature
- Separating different types of food to prevent cross contamination e.g. keeping raw meat separate from cooked meat

- Using food within date marks
- Making sure frozen food is thoroughly defrosted before cooking unless the manufacturer states otherwise
- Adequate cooking and reheating of food (to at least 75°C in the centre)
- Cooling food to below 8°C as quickly as possible or keeping at the correct hot holding temperature of 63°C or above
- Good personal hygiene
- Food hygiene training
- Effective cleaning routines using correct chemicals, dilutions and contact times
- Pest control


### **The Checks:**

- You need to regularly monitor the controls you put in place. How you do this will depend on the size and nature of your food business. Examples of typical checks you need to make are:
- Ensuring food is properly cooked e.g. by checking the centre temperature of food has reached 75°C using a probe thermometer or cutting into the centre of food to check it is thoroughly cooked
- Ensuring any reheated food is thoroughly reheated, reaches a centre temperature of 75°C and is not reheated more than once
- Delivery and storage temperatures (store chilled food at 5°C or below and frozen food at -18°C or below)
- Date marks – use food within its “use by” or “best before” date
- Cleaning and maintenance of the premises. It is a good idea to carry out routine daily checks prior to the kitchen being used and at the end of the day, after it has been cleaned to ensure cleaning is thorough and that the equipment and structure is intact. Make sure cleaning chemicals are being used in accordance with the manufacturers instructions
- Check that all staff maintain high levels of personal hygiene, including regularly washing their hands

If the checks reveal that there is a problem, then you must take action. You and your staff need to know what to do in such circumstances and reference to this should be included within your food safety management system.

### **Recording checks:**

Checks should be recorded but the way in which you record the checks can be in whatever form suits you and your staff. For instance, it may not be practical to record every time you carry out a check. You may just prefer to



make a record when problems are found and to include in your record the action you took to put things right. You may wish to use forms or checklists to record the checks or you may simply prefer to keep a note in your diary. However, you must keep your records to help you review your system and to demonstrate you are complying with the law.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **For further information**

- Contact: Food, Health and Safety Team, Eden District Council, Mansion House, Penrith CA11 7YG
- Telephone: 01768 212491
- Email: [env.health@eden.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@eden.gov.uk)
- Website: [www.eden.gov.uk](http://www.eden.gov.uk)

You may also find the following websites useful:

Food Standards Agency: [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)

Health and Safety Executive: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)