

KEEPING YOUR CHILD'S FOOD SAFE

Target Audience:

Adults, With Infants

Adults, With Preschoolers

Topic Areas:

Feeding My Baby (0-12 months)

- Not offer the baby food from the jar or from large bowls full of food
- Only use the microwave to heat the baby's food if it is out of the jar to avoid hotspots
- Check to make sure that food heated in the microwave is not too hot
- Provide safe finger foods (for example, toast squares, soda crackers, cooked vegetable slices, fruit wedges, soft tortilla; **Not** corn, berries, popcorn, nuts or raisins which can be a choking hazard)

Feeding My Toddler

- Watch over the toddler when she/he is eating peanut butter or small foods to reduce risk of choking

Keeping Germs Out Of My Kitchen

- Wash hands with warm, soapy water before and after handling food (especially raw poultry, fish or meat) and after going to the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets.
- Wash everything that touches food with hot soapy water before it touches another food, especially where preparing meat (for example, knives, cutting boards.)

KEEPING YOUR CHILD'S FOOD SAFE

Lesson Creator(s):

Daryl L. Minch, M.Ed., CFCS, Family and Community Health Sciences Educator,
Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Somerset County

Purpose:

Participants will learn how to prepare, serve and store food for infants and young children to prevent food borne illness and choking.

What the Nutrition Educator Needs to Know So That Participants' Questions Can Be Answered:

You should have a good understanding of food safety principles and practices. For more information, consult the reference and additional reading lists at the end of the background information before teaching this lesson.

Infants and young children are more at risk for food borne illness because their bodies' immune systems are not well developed due to their young age. Children under five years of age may get sick sooner, suffer more acute symptoms, need a doctor's care or may even die if they get food borne illness. Parents and caregivers need to be extra careful.

Bacteria are one cause of food borne illness. They cannot be seen, smelled or tasted. The only way to be sure food is safe is to follow good food handling practices.

These food-handling practices are¹:

1. Wash hands for 20 seconds with warm, soapy water before preparing food or feeding your child and after using the bathroom, changing diapers or handling pets.
2. Wash your child's hands for 20 seconds with warm, soapy water before feeding her/him or letting her/him feed her/himself. Moist towelettes or waterless hand cleaners may be substituted if water is unavailable. Soap and water are best.
3. Clean all surfaces before preparing or serving food.

4. Jarred Foods

- Feed from a bowl or plate, not the jar. When you feed from the jar, the bacteria from the baby's mouth gets into the food. If you only use part of the jar, the bacteria can grow even if refrigerated. The remaining food may make the baby sick. It's only ok to feed from the jar if the food will all be used at one time.
- Refrigerate unused portions right away.

5. Homemade pureed or strained baby food

- Follow good food handling practices.
- Cook food thoroughly and use a thermometer to make sure it's at the proper temperature (see chart below). Never serve young children undercooked food.
- Cool food rapidly and store it properly.

6. Cook food in an oven temperature of at least 325°F. Always use a thermometer to measure the internal temperature and ensure food reaches the minimum temperature,

Cook It Right Chart²
Beef, veal, port, lamb -145° followed by a 3 minute rest
Poultry -165°
Ground beef, veal, pork, lamb - 160°
Ground poultry - 165°
Finfish –145° or opaque flesh throughout
Shellfish – opaque flesh pearly and opaque
Eggs – yolk and white are firm, not runny
Casseroles - 165°
Left-overs - 165°; heat left-over liquids (soup, gravy) to a full boil

7. Table food

- Follow good food handling practices.
- Cook food thoroughly and use a thermometer to make sure it's at the proper temperature (see chart above). Never serve young children undercooked food.
- Cool food rapidly and store it properly.

8. Transporting food while traveling, shopping, visiting friends or going to the park

- Use an insulated bag or cooler.
- Put an ice pack in the cooler to keep food and beverages cold.

9. Use of a microwave oven to heat food - **Be very cautious**

- Be very cautious if you heat formula or baby food in a microwave oven. Food can get very hot!
- Microwave ovens may heat food unevenly. To reduce the risk of hot or cool spots, stir, rotate or turn food. Allow the food to "stand or rest" for a couple of minutes and check the temperature in several spots before serving. Feed food at lukewarm temperature.
- Heat only enough food for one feeding. Every microwave oven is different.
- Generally, 15 seconds on High (100% power) is enough for 4 ounces of baby food. Remember that foods like meat, poultry and eggs heat faster.
- Heat baby food in a dish rather than in the jar
- Children can be badly burned by hot liquids. Always stir or shake liquids (formula, soup) after heating and allow to "stand or rest" for 5 minutes. Stir or shake again and check the temperature before serving.

10. Choking:

- Young children under age four are at risk for choking because their throats are small and they may not chew foods well.
- Here are some foods that present a choking hazard: hot dogs, raw carrot or celery sticks, whole bananas, cooked carrot "pennies," whole grapes, popcorn, chips, nuts, string cheese, round cereals, peanut butter (more often when it is spread on thickly or eaten from a spoon), marshmallows and round candies.
- The "choking prevention card" (at the end of the lesson) tell caregivers what to do. Other hazards include cutting children's food into small pieces, supervising children when eating, feeding children when seated, and reminding children to chew and eat slowly.

References:

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Preparing Food Safely (FS587) Schaffner, D. Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural
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Serving Food Safely (FS589). Schaffner, D. Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural
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Handle with Care: Keep Your Child's Food Safe (FS948), Minch, D. Rutgers New
Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, July 1999:
<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS948>. Retrieved November 2014

Additional Reading:

Baby Food and Infant Formula, Food Safety.gov:
<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/types/babyfood>. Retrieved November 2014

Keeping Kids Safe. USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, 2000:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/appendj.pdf>. Retrieved November 2014

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Main Themes:

Nutrition & Diet

Cooking & Food Storage

Shopping

Budgeting

Safety & Sanitation

Materials Needed:

- Stem Thermometer (Use to show what it looks like and to explain its use.)
- Pictures of food with thermometer in the proper location: Enlarge drawings from USDA brochure on a photocopier and mount on sturdy cardboard or laminate. These can also be found in the lesson entitled *Thermometers: Where to Stick 'em*
- Grab Bag (to hold food, food models or pictures)
- Food Models, food pictures or real food:
Possible Foods: hot dog, raw carrot or celery stick, whole banana, thawed frozen carrot "coins", grapes, popcorn, chips, nuts, string cheese, round cereals, peanut butter, marshmallows, and hard candy.
- Brown clay hamburger: Use brown modeling clay (not play dough) to mold a hamburger. Store in plastic bag and it will last indefinitely.
- Cutting Board (if real foods are used)
- Knife (if real foods are used)
- Handouts: "Choking prevention card" - one per participant
Note: instructor may laminate each sheet before cutting; Inexpensive magnetic strips can be put on the back.
- Scenario cards - one per participant (glue to index cards and laminate for longer use)
- RCE fact sheet: *Handle with Care: Keep Your Child's Food Safe* - copy back to back and fold one per participant.
<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS948>

Time the Activity is Expected to Take:

Class Recap: 5 minutes

Activity 1: 15-30 minutes

Activity 2: 10 minutes

Activity 3: 10 minutes

Next Week's Goals: 5 minutes

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Lesson Plan:

Class Recap: (5-10 minutes)

1. Begin the class by asking participants to share their experiences related to their goals that they set the previous lesson. Keep this part of the class to about 5 minutes.

Activity 1: "What would you do to keep your child's food safe?" (15-30 minutes)

Introduction: Today we are going to talk about things we can do to keep our children from getting sick from germs or bacteria which might be on food. Food borne illness or "food poisoning" can be very serious for infants or young children. Some children throw-up or have diarrhea, others have kidney failure and a few have died. But don't worry, there's a lot we can do to keep food safe.

1. Give each participant a scenario card that describes the age of the child, the type of food and meal, and where the meal or feeding will take place.
2. Ask the participants to tell what they would do to ensure that the child's food was safe and what practices would be important to avoid. Give participants 5 minutes to form their responses.
3. Ask participants-to take turns describing their scenario and the specific steps they would follow. The other participants and the instructor may add their ideas at the end.

Note: This lesson focuses on food safety, but it's possible that the type of food may generate some other discussions as well. Use these "teachable moments" to share nutrition information.

Scenarios	Practices that may be mentioned:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby; 4 months, getting rice cereal mixed with formula for the first time at home. • The microwave oven is used to heat the cereal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands (adult and child) • Mix only enough cereal to use at one time • Use "fresh" formula • Stir cereal, so it will heat evenly and test temperature (preferably with a stem thermometer) before giving it to the baby • Do not save leftover cereal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby, 7 months, having lunch at Grandma's. Lunch consists of barley cereal, string beans, and carrots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands (adult and child) • Mix only enough cereal to use at one time • Dish out small amounts • If microwaved, make sure to stir so it will heat evenly and test temperature before giving it to the child • Do not save anything leftover • Make sure table or tray is clean
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby, 9 months, having a snack in the mall. Snack brought from home includes jarred applesauce, crackers and formula. The older brother is having French fries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands (adult and child) • Use ice packs to keep food cold • Throwaway all food that is not eaten • Make sure French fries are not too hot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby, one year, having dinner at home. The family dinner includes baked chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, and milk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a thermometer to make sure chicken is cooked thoroughly • Wash hands (adult and child) • Dish out small amounts • If microwaved make sure to stir so it will heat evenly and test temperature Before giving it to the child • Do not save anything leftover • Make sure table or tray is clean
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child, 2 years, eating lunch at the park with Mom. Lunch is crackers, American cheese, sliced turkey (from deli), cooked carrot.sticks, apple, and milk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands (adult and child) • Use ice packs to keep food cold • Throw away all food that is not eaten
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child, age 3, at a party. Menu includes hamburgers, hot dogs, French fries, baked beans, raw vegetables & dip, cut-up fruit in bowl, cake, and juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands (adult and Child) • Hot foods are should be hot and cooked thoroughly (hamburgers and hot dogs) • Cold foods should be kept cold (veg. dip and fruit kept in the fridge or on ice) • Be sure foods are not too hot for child to eat.

Finish this activity by:

Reviewing each section of the Fight Bac publications: *Four simple steps to food safety* and *Crib Sheet: Keeping Young Children Safe for Food Poisoning*. Remember not to talk longer than 10 minutes, at a time.

Activity 2: "Using a Thermometer" 10 minutes

1. Ask participants: How can you tell if meat (including poultry) is done?
[Wait for answers. Possible ones include: slicing into the meat, sticking a fork into the meat, looking at the color of the meat, using a thermometer, etc.]

Experts tell us that looking at meat is not enough. Meat may look done (dark color and clear juices), and still not be hot enough to kill germs. Germs that live can make us sick. The only way to be sure that meat is cooked to the proper temperature is to use a thermometer.

2. Continue the discussion by asking: Who owns a thermometer? Who uses it every time they cook? Who uses it when you grill meat on a barbecue?

Experts say we should use a thermometer every time.

One type of thermometer that is quick and easy to use is the instant-read type. [Show one now.] Does anyone own one of these? You may purchase one in grocery stores or wherever kitchen tools are sold. They cost about \$12.

3. Explain & show how to use an instant-read thermometer:
 - Insert stem about 2 inches into the thickest part of the food, but not touching any bone. Sometimes you need to insert the thermometer sideways [use your brown clay hamburger model to demonstrate. Show pictures with the correct placement of a thermometer.]
 - Leave the thermometer in the food until the needle on the dial stops moving, usually in 15 seconds. Read the temperature.
 - Do not leave this type of thermometer in the food while cooking in an oven (it will melt) or in the microwave oven (it can cause sparks).

Summary: When should you use a thermometer?

Answer = Every time you cook meat.

It is also a good idea to use a thermometer when you cook with a microwave. Microwaves heat unevenly, so when you do so, make sure to check the temperature in several places.

Cook It Right Chart

Beef, veal, port, lamb -145° followed by 3 minute rest

Poultry -165°

Ground beef, veal, pork, lamb - 160°

Ground poultry - 165°

Finfish –145° or opaque flesh throughout

Shellfish – opaque flesh pearly and opaque

Eggs – yolk and white are firm, not runny

Casseroles - 165°

Left-overs - 165°; heat left-over liquids (soup, gravy) to a full boil

Activity 3: "Choking Prevention" (10 minutes)

(Source: Minnesota: Simply Good Eating, p. 127 -128)

Introduction: Infants and young children can choke easily because they: may not chew thoroughly, put too much in their mouth, or just because their throats are small. Again, there are lots of things we can do to prevent choking.

Note: Instructor may choose to use real foods or food models or food pictures for this activity.

Real foods:

1. The leader puts some of the real food, food models or food pictures from the list below into a grab bag. A knife and cutting board should be on the table, if using real food.

Possible foods: hot dog, raw carrot or celery sticks, whole banana, thawed frozen carrot «pennies», grapes, popcorn, chips, nuts, string cheese, round cereals, peanut butter, marshmallows, and round candy.

2. Participants take turns removing items from the bag and discussing and/or showing why the food is a choking hazard. They should also tell what, if anything; they would do to make it safer.

Next Week's Goals: (5 minutes)

1. Ask the participants to name one thing that they learned in today's class that they will use. Make sure that each learning objective is mentioned, and if not, be sure to re-state that objective. Ask them to choose a related goal to work on during the week. Let them know that they will be sharing their personal experiences during the next class.
2. Invite comments, suggestions, or questions.
3. Thank the participants for coming and tell them what the class will be about in the next lesson.

For the Teacher: "What makes this lesson behaviorally focused?"

- Class recap is behaviorally focused because participants discuss the behaviors they have used from the previous lesson.
- Activity 1 is behaviorally focused because the participants to think and discuss how they would ensure that foods are served safely to their children.
- Activity 2 is behaviorally focused because the participants discuss and demonstrate ways that they would reduce the risk of children choking on certain foods.
- In Next Week's Goals, the participants are invited to name one thing that they learned during the class that they will use. Through this activity and by reviewing the objectives again, the participants are reminded of the many topics discussed during the lesson. They will choose the behaviors that they will want to work on during the coming week.



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Scenario Cards

Laminate & cut apart OR cut apart & glue on index cards

What would you do to make sure your child's food was safe in this situation? What practices would you avoid?

Baby, 4 months, getting rice cereal mixed with formula for the first time at home. The microwave oven was used to heat the cereal.



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What would you do to make sure your child's food was safe in this situation? What practices would you avoid?

Baby, 7 months, having lunch at Grandma's. Lunch consists of barley cereal, string beans, and carrots.



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What would you do to make sure your child's food was safe in this situation? What practices would you avoid?

Baby, 9 months, having a snack in the mall. Snack brought from home includes jarred applesauce, crackers and formula. The older brother is having French fries.



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What would you do to make sure your child's food was safe in this situation? What practices would you avoid?

Baby, one year, having dinner at home. The family dinner includes baked chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, and milk.



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What would you do to make sure your child's food was safe in this situation? What practices would you avoid?

Child, 2 years, eating lunch at the park with Mom. Lunch is crackers, American cheese, sliced turkey (from deli), cooked carrot sticks or “coins,” apple, and milk.



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What would you do to make sure your child's food was safe in this situation? What practices would you avoid?

Child, age 3, at a party. Menu includes hamburgers, hot dogs, French fries, baked beans, raw vegetables & dip, cut-up fruit in bowl, cake, and juice.



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Prevent Choking

Young children may choke on some foods. Follow these tips & watch children when they eat.

- ♥ Cut *hot dogs, grapes & whole bananas* lengthwise into four pieces.
- ♥ Pull *string* cheese into narrow strands of cheese & cut into short pieces.
- ♥ Spread *peanut butter* thinly & avoid serving on a spoon.
- ♥ Avoid or watch carefully: *raw carrot or celery sticks, cooked carrot "coins," round cereals, popcorn, chips, nuts, marshmallows & hard candies.*



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