

Food Safety Staff In-service

Use

A nutrition staff member should deliver this in-service to nurses, nursing assistants, and kitchen staff. Provide a kitchen thermometer as a door prize to encourage attendance! Serve a healthy snack.

Introduction

Keeping foods safe is critical to preventing illness carried to people by food, which is referred to as foodborne illness. The elderly and/or people who are sick are at a higher risk for complications and death from foodborne illness than healthy people. Foods that are most likely to become unsafe are called “potentially hazardous foods” and are ones in which bacteria can grow quickly.

The three main causes of foodborne illness are time-temperature abuse, cross-contamination, and poor personal hygiene. It is important that all staff members know what foods are potential sources of foodborne illness and what they can do to help prevent it.

Objectives

Following the in-service, staff will know:

- Three foods that are common causes of foodborne illness
- Three symptoms of foodborne illnesses
- What to do to help prevent foodborne illness

Outline

I. Foodborne illness basics:

- People who are elderly, are receiving chemotherapy, or have chronic illnesses are more susceptible to foodborne illness than healthy people
- Most foodborne illnesses are caused by bacteria, viruses, or toxins that are found in food
- *Salmonella* and *Escherichia coli* (*E coli*) are just two of many organisms that can cause foodborne illness
- Each type of foodborne illness has different symptoms, but nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or abdominal cramping and fever and dehydration are common symptoms for most, with symptoms starting shortly after eating a food, but sometimes not occurring until up to 72 hours later
- If several patients are having similar gastrointestinal symptoms, the cause is maybe foodborne illness

II. Foods that are common causes of foodborne illness (potentially hazardous foods):

- Foods that are slightly acidic or with a neutral pH (most of the food we eat)
- Foods that contain protein (meat, poultry, dairy products, and eggs)
- Foods that contain a good amount of water, including fruits and vegetables
- Any food that is served raw or uncooked

III. Practices that can prevent foodborne illnesses:

- Keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold:
 - Store cold foods at <41° F
 - Cook hot foods to a proper temperature (temperature varies depending on food)
 - Hold hot foods at the proper temperature before and after meal service (135° F or higher)
 - Cool hot foods quickly and correctly
 - Reheat cooked foods to at least 165° F
 - Keep food out of the temperature “danger zone” whenever possible (41° F to 135° F)
- Preventing cross-contamination (spreading of bacteria from one food to another):
 - Store meats on bottom shelf of refrigerators and freezers to prevent juice from dripping on other foods
 - Sanitize utensils and cutting surfaces when switching from meats to other foods
 - Keep raw foods completely separate from cooked or ready-to-eat foods
- Practice good personal hygiene:
 - Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water after using restroom, smoking, eating, drinking, switching from raw to cooked food, blowing your nose, or touching your skin
 - Use precautions when using protective gloves—change gloves frequently
 - Do not cough, sneeze, or spit on food, or eat in food preparation areas or while serving food to patients

Activity

Note to presenter: Make a copies of Cassie’s Food Safety Mistakes. Give each participant a copy.

Cassie’s Food Safety Mistakes

Cassie decided to prepare meat loaf for dinner for a friend and herself. She took the ground beef out of the top shelf of the refrigerator and then realized she did not have any bread crumbs. She left the ground beef on the counter while she ran to the store to pick up what she needed. When she returned, she put the ground beef in a bowl and mixed in bread crumbs, eggs, and onions.

As she was mixing the meat loaf with her hands, her cat jumped up on the counter to say hello and she petted the cat. She finished mixing the meat loaf and put it in the oven. The oven was set to come on in 2 hours, so they could eat as soon as they had returned from the movies. She then prepared a vegetable salad using the chopping board. She left the salad on the counter as she raced out the door to meet her friend.

What were Cassie’s food safety mistakes?

- Stored ground beef on the top shelf of the refrigerator, instead of on the bottom shelf
- Left ground beef on the counter while she ran to the store

- Mixed the meat loaf with hands that were not washed
- Petted the cat while mixing the meat loaf—did not wash hands
- Allowed the uncooked meatloaf with raw eggs and ground beef to sit in the oven
- Prepared salad on the cutting board that she used to thaw the ground beef—did not sanitize it following use
- Left the salad sitting out at room temperature instead of refrigerating it

Food Safety Pretest and Posttest

Name: _____

Date: _____

Department: _____

1. Which is not usually a symptom of foodborne illness?
 - a. Constipation
 - b. Nausea
 - c. Vomiting
 - d. Dehydration
2. True or false: Fruits and vegetables can cause foodborne illness.
3. When should those who handle food wash their hands?
 - a. After smoking
 - b. After using the restroom
 - c. After wiping their hands on a cleaning cloth
 - d. All of the above
4. Who is likely to get foodborne illness?
 - a. A 55-year-old woman recovering from surgery
 - b. A 93-year-old woman
 - c. A 40-year-old man on chemotherapy
 - d. All of the above
5. Which is a good way to prevent cross-contamination of food?
 - a. Store raw meats separately from fresh vegetables
 - b. Cook foods to the proper temperature
 - c. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold
 - d. Reheat foods to 165° F before serving again

Answer key

1. a. Constipation
2. True

3. d. All of the above
4. d. All of the above
5. a. Store raw meats separately from fresh vegetables

References and recommended readings

National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC). Bacteria and foodborne illness. Available at: <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/bacteria/index.htm>. Accessed October 28, 2010.

Partnership for Food Safety Education. Fight bac!: keep foods safe from bacteria. Available at: <http://www.fightbac.org>. Accessed October 1, 2010.

Review Date 12/10
G-1468