

# Helpful Tips for the Life Enrichment Professional



## **Food Safety reminders for everyday applications.**

*We serve a high risk population. Do your part to keep them safe.*

### **Create an environment of awareness**

Article Author - Chef Rick Schmitt, CDM, CFPP – Vice President, SC ANFP

Let's face it. We spend a great deal of time in our communities handling, preparing and enjoying food with our residents, staff and guests. It is of utmost importance for everyone involved that certain safeguards are taken for any event where food and beverages are served. Here are some helpful tips to help protect your patrons, satisfy regulatory requirements, and improve satisfaction.

**Wash your hands!** I cannot stress this enough. The number one method to prevent foodborne illness and the spread of infections is to Wash your Hands! Wash them thoroughly – soap, warm to hot water, friction from scrubbing, and thorough rinsing. Always dry your hands with a disposable paper towel.

**Proper glove use.** This goes “hand in hand” with washing your hands. When handling any ready to eat foods (toast, fruits, sandwiches, and so on) you must wear gloves. Gloves must be worn when preparing raw foods as well. Please don't forget a hair restraint while preparing foods. A hair contaminate is just as likely to cause an illness as any other means of cross contamination.

**Buy from approved sources.** All foods should be purchased from businesses that are inspected by health officials. Grocery stores, food distributors, restaurants and bakeries are good examples. Before you buy those gorgeous tomatoes at the corner fruit stand for your afternoon social, make sure that the establishment is inspected regularly.

**Home prepared and canned foods.** These items, in most cases, can only be shared with the individual that they are brought to. They cannot be shared with the general residents (SNFs and ALFs). All food for residents or patients must be prepared in an inspected facility that has successfully passed

foodsafety and sanitation inspections by local and/or federal inspection agents.

**Time and temperature.** Food is safest when it is fresh and served at the proper temperatures. Cold foods should be held and served cold, and hot foods should be hot. No foods should be held for long periods of time. Some exceptions exist in some states for cookout and picnic type events when it comes to holding of products outside of normal cooling and hot holding methods, but even then those products must be disposed of after a certain time. Check your local and state guidelines for exact time and temperature specifications.

**Sanitized food contact surfaces.** When preparing food, clean is not good enough. All food contact surfaces must be clean and sanitized. Cutting boards, utensils, knives, mixing bowls – all must be clean and sanitized. Cutting boards must be used for one item only before being cleaned and sanitized for use with the next item. Most kitchens use color coded boards. Ask your Food Service Director or Certified Dietary Manager to explain it to you.

**Teach and model good safety habits.** Safety is everyone's business – and so is foodsafety. Practice good habits when working with food and beverages. Teach new employees good habits, and correct them when needed. You would be surprised how many people do not know how to properly wash their hands. It is your job as a member of the community to promote awareness.

**Nurture a good relationship with culinary services.** Most foodservice workers are willing to help make your programming successful. If you have a Chef, create a new ally. Use the relationship to both of your advantages. Customer satisfaction and well being is what it's all about anyway!