



Title	Food Handling Policy
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FOOD HANDLING POLICY

Aim: Staff prepare and manage food in a safe manner to prevent food related illness, and in accordance with current food legislation.

A 'food handler' is any person who handles drinks or opened/unopened food, equipment, utensils or surfaces used for food preparation/serving. A 'food handler' is also anyone who may touch food contact surfaces or other surfaces in rooms where open food is handled, including managers, cleaners, maintenance contractors and inspectors [FSA, 2009].

Standards

Food Handlers

1. Food Handlers suffering from diarrhoea and / or vomiting and other symptoms of food borne infections (e.g. nausea, abdominal pain, fever), heavy colds, skin infections, including sore and discharging lesions must inform their Supervisor or Nurse in Charge and not participate in food handling duties until advice has been sought from Occupational Health. [see also: [GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESS: STAFF GUIDELINE](#)]
2. Before handling or serving food, including beverages, all food handlers must wash their hands in the wash hand basin nearest to the food serving point
3. All food handlers should observe the personal hygiene rules and wear a **blue disposable apron** when handling or serving food, whether it is for main meals or beverages, e.g. morning, afternoon and evening refreshments. Aprons should be stored within the kitchen area and **must** be removed after kitchen duties are complete. White aprons must not be used for food handling duties

Serving of Food

1. Any food served should be in line with the individual's care plan
2. Serving of food should commence as soon as possible and certainly within **15 minutes of arrival**. Any food deemed unacceptable must be returned to the issuing kitchen and the Catering Manager / Deputy informed
3. Food in insulated containers: the container lids must not be removed until food is to be served

4. Ice cream sent to wards in trolleys should be placed in ward kitchen freezer immediately on arrival. Where a kitchen freezer is not available the ice cream should remain in the insulated container and should be served at the end of that meal. All unused ice-cream must be disposed of
5. On no account should any food from the patients' food trolley be stored at ward level, with the exception of date-stamped pre-packed products. If patients are out of the ward at meal times, please contact the catering staff to make alternative arrangements
6. All unused food must be returned to the main kitchen or central wash-up, or disposed of via a waste disposal unit. No unused food must be kept on the ward. **Staff must not consume food or drink intended for patients**

Patients menu cards should be kept for 7 days to aid investigation should a food-borne outbreak occur

7. Patients and visitors must not be allowed into ward kitchens.

Exceptions may apply where patients are in hostel type accommodation where self-catering is encouraged

Patients' Food

Relatives should be discouraged from bringing in foods and are restricted to providing commercially available products, which are date stamped and labelled with the patient's name. The rationale for any exception from this must be documented in the patient's notes. A record should be made of the food eaten, the date and time of consumption, and where it was purchased or made.

Microwave Ovens

Any microwaves in care areas are for staff use only and must not be used in ward areas to reheat patients' meals. The exception to this is the Apetito microwave provided for regeneration of Apetito meals.

Windows

Kitchen windows must be closed at all times except where insect proof mesh is in place.

High Risk Foods

Definition: Foods which, under favourable conditions, support the multiplication of pathogenic bacteria and are intended for consumption without further treatment that would destroy the pathogens. Such foods are usually ready to eat, high protein, moist foods which require refrigeration.

They include:

- cooked meats and cooked meat products, including gravy and stock
- unpasteurised milk, cream, custards
- cooked eggs
- egg and dairy products, unpasteurised soft cheeses
- cooked poultry
- shellfish and other ready to eat sea foods
- cooked rice
- pre-mixed raw vegetable salads, such as coleslaw.

Food Hygiene

Every year thousands of people suffer from food-borne illness. A few, especially the very young, the elderly or the infirm will die. Many of our patients are particularly at risk. Healthcare staff must provide a high standard of food hygiene to ensure that food poisoning is prevented.

All food handlers in healthcare premises must be provided with the appropriate knowledge and training to ensure that their systems of work minimise the risks of food poisoning.

Please contact the Catering Department for details on available food hygiene training.

The ten main risk factors for food poisoning:

1. Food prepared too far in advance and stored at room temperature, i.e. not under refrigeration.

2. Cooling food too slowly before refrigeration.
3. Not reheating food to high enough temperatures to destroy food poisoning bacteria.
4. The use of cooked food contaminated with food poisoning bacteria.
5. Undercooking.
6. Not thawing frozen poultry for sufficient time.
7. Cross-contamination from raw food to cooked food.
8. Storing hot food below 63°C.
9. Infected food handlers.
10. Use of leftovers.

Personal hygiene

A high standard of personal hygiene is very important to prevent the food handler contaminating food.

To prevent contamination:

- Food handlers must wash their hands regularly throughout the working day, and especially:
 - after visiting the toilet
 - on entering and re-entering the food preparation area
 - between handling raw and cooked food
 - after eating, smoking, coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose
 - after handling waste food or refuse
 - after handling cleaning chemicals
- Smoking is prohibited in any room in which food is prepared or stored
- Fingernails should be kept short and clean. Nail varnish may contaminate food and therefore should not be used. False nails must not be worn
- Hair must be worn short or tied up in accordance with the [Dress Code, Uniform and Laundering Policy](#)

- Food handlers should not eat or, chew gum, taste food with their fingers or unwashed spoons or blow on china or glass to polish it
- Avoid touching face, nose and mouth while preparing or serving food
- Cuts, spots and sores should be completely covered by a detectable blue waterproof dressing available from your place of work
- Food handlers should not wear earrings, watches, jewelled rings or brooches
- A clean blue disposable apron should be worn when preparing, cooking or serving food
- See also [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#)

Cleaning

The maintenance of high standards of cleanliness in all areas is given a high priority by NHS Borders, particularly in areas in which food is handled.

Cleaning schedules must clearly outline the frequency which cleaning is to be carried out, the materials to be used including chemicals, the method to be used and the standards to be achieved. It is therefore essential that personnel who are asked to carry out such tasks are made aware of the content of the cleaning schedule for their area.

The level of cleanliness will be monitored daily by the Nurse in Charge or General Services Supervisor responsible for a particular area.

It will be the responsibility of the Charge Nurse or General Services Supervisor to check that Kitchen Audits are being completed monthly, and to check periodically that the standards of cleanliness highlighted in the cleaning schedules are being met.

Pest control

Sightings of pests or pest damage should be reported to management immediately and get expert advice urgently by contacting Estates Department, who will call in specialists if necessary. Common pests include insects, flies, wasps, cockroaches, birds, mainly feral pigeons and sparrows, and rodents.

Good housekeeping

To reduce the risk of infestation, ensure that:

- Premises and refuse areas are kept in a clean and tidy condition. Lids are always kept on waste bins, which should be washed after emptying, together with the surrounding area. Waste must not be allowed to accumulate
- Food on display or awaiting preparation is always kept covered
- Spills are cleared away promptly
- Food is stored off the floor and clear of walls to facilitate regular inspection. Stock should be checked regularly and damaged stock removed
- Food is stored in pest/ rodent-proof containers and lids are always replaced
- All deliveries of raw materials, packaging and laundry are checked to ensure their freedom from infestation
- Drains are kept clean and in good condition, a water trap is always maintained and gullies have tight-fitting metal grills
- Vegetation covering the immediate outside access to the food premises should be removed

Temperature control

Food must be delivered, stored, cooked and served at the correct temperatures to ensure the minimum risk of food poisoning. At various "critical points" the temperature of the food must be monitored and recorded, to ensure the maintenance of standards.

Digital Probe Thermometers must be used where a built-in device is not supplied.

Delivery

When testing incoming high risk food the temperature immediately below the surface of the food (not wrappings) should be taken as well as core temperature. The higher of the two temperatures should be recorded on the monitoring sheet.

Refrigerator temperatures (1°C - 4°C,)

Routine monitoring of fridge units will be taken minimum twice daily by using the fridge thermometer provide or built in display. [see also **WARD REFRIGERATORS: GUIDELINES FOR USE**]

Freezer temperatures (-18°C)

Where freezers have their own built-in temperature recording devices these will be recorded minimum twice daily. Probe thermometers should be used once a week to verify these results. When the probe is used its use should be highlighted in the 'remarks' column of the temperature monitoring sheet.

FOR DAY UNITS:

Contact Catering Manager, Borders General Hospital for advice concerning any aspect of the Food Hygiene Policy

See also:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/16/contents>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/fitnesstoworkguide09v3.pdf>