

# 幼兒膳食服務

食物安全指引

FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES ON  
CATERING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN



食物安全中心  
Centre for Food Safety

## Introduction

The child care centres in Hong Kong provide various child care services including provision of meals. As the food for young children may involve more handling procedures (e.g. grinding and cutting into smaller pieces) and children are more vulnerable to illnesses than adults, food handlers should pay special attention to food safety.



## Understanding Food Poisoning

Food poisoning is caused by consumption of foods or drinks contaminated with pathogens including bacteria (e.g. salmonella), viruses (e.g. norovirus), toxins (e.g. ciguatoxin), chemicals (e.g. pesticide) and parasites.

Depending on the causative agent involved, patients may fall ill within hours or days after consumption. Common symptoms include nausea, abdominal pain, diarrhoea and vomiting.

## Guidelines on Preparation of Meals for Children

1

### Facilities

- Ensure that adequate facilities such as stove, refrigerator and heat-holding equipment are available.

2

### Purchase and receipt of ingredients

- Purchase ingredients from reliable suppliers.
- Confirm that the suppliers have obtained relevant and valid licences from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). (For example, shops selling meat must have Fresh Provision Shop Licences and lunch boxes should be supplied by licensed food factories approved to supply lunch boxes.) The list of licensed food premises is available from the FEHD website.
- Check the quality of the ingredients upon receipt.
- Meals provided by caterers should be delivered to the centres in heat-insulating containers.





### 3

## Storage facilities and temperature control

- Stick to the “first-in-first-out” principle for food storage.
- Check and record the temperature of refrigerators regularly. Maintain the temperature of chillers at 4°C or below and freezers at -18°C or below.
- Raw and cooked foods should be properly covered and kept in separate refrigerators. If they are stored in the same refrigerator, put cooked foods on upper shelves and raw ones on lower shelves to prevent cross-contamination.
- Meals provided by caterers should be stored in heat-insulating containers and kept above 60°C until consumption.

### 4

## Food handling and cooking

- Defrost frozen food in chiller or under running water.
- Cook thoroughly. Use a thermometer to ensure that the centre of the food reaches 75°C or above for at least 30 seconds.
- To cater for the special dietary needs of children:
  - adopt the “cook-serve system” (i.e. serve the food right after cooking) to shorten the preparation time;
  - handle cooked food that needs further processing (e.g. puree) carefully; and
  - clean and sanitise thoroughly all the utensils that come in contact with food (especially blenders for cooked food and feeding spoons) before use. Sanitisation can be done by using bactericidal agents or immersing cleaned utensils in boiling water for at least one minute. (A list of approved bactericidal agents is available from the FEHD website.)



### 5

## Meal distribution and consumption

- When portioning food on site:
  - cooked food should be stored in heat-insulating containers and kept above 60°C;
  - ensure that there is adequate space, equipment or facilities (e.g.





food warming devices) and manpower to distribute the food quickly and hygienically.

- The meals should be consumed as soon as possible and finished in one go.

## 6

### Maintaining good personal hygiene

- Before handling food and after using toilets, wash hands with liquid soap for at least 20 seconds, rinse thoroughly and then wipe or blow-dry the hands.
- Food handlers with symptoms such as diarrhoea and vomiting should not handle food.

## 7

### Handling food complaint

- Food complaints can reflect problems that may have been overlooked during food preparation. Child care centre that provides catering service should therefore handle complaints promptly and positively.
- Child care centre should :
  - Develop a contingency plan for food poisoning incident in advance.
  - When problems are identified, ask the children to stop eating the food immediately to prevent further food incidents.
  - Maintain the following records at all times to facilitate follow-up actions:
    - name list of the children to whom meals are provided everyday (with information such as the types of food served);
    - list of ingredient suppliers;
    - daily purchase record;
    - information including telephone numbers and addresses of the caterer.

For more information or enquiries, please contact the Communication Resource Unit of the Centre for Food Safety at 2381 6096.