



Food Hygiene Guidance For Childminders

Produced by the Food Safety Team, Public Health Services, Bristol
City Council

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Food Law and you

If you are a registered childminder who looks after children in your home, and you provide meals and drinks for the children in your care, you will also be a food business under the current food law in this country. Previously you were required to register separately as a food business with your local council. However, from January 2014 the local authority will automatically be informed when you register with OFSTED so you do not need to fill out a separate food premises registration form.

It is important that if there are any changes to your business, or if you stop operating as a child-minder providing food, you must inform the Food Safety Team

The legal requirements relating to food safety can seem complicated, but this guidance has been designed to help you know what you have to do to keep on the right side of the law.

Inspections

After you have registered with OFSTED you may need an inspection by officers from the Food Safety Team of Bristol City Council to ensure that you are meeting the required standards. Whether or not you will need an inspection will depend upon the extent and nature and of food handling you do as part of your child-minding business.

It is normal practice for officers to undertake unannounced inspections, but since you work in your own home you are entitled to expect 24 hours' notice of an inspection. Usually a Food Safety officer will contact you to discuss the type of food preparation you carry out for your minded children and then, if necessary, make an appointment to visit you at home.

The next steps

Training

It is not a legal requirement for food handlers to have formal food hygiene training, but they must have sufficient knowledge to be able to handle, prepare, cook and store food safely. There are a number of providers who undertake this type of training in the local area, and there is a list on the Council website. Alternatively, there are a number of on-line training packages which you can access. As a general rule those on-line courses that are accredited to the main public health professional bodies (CIEH, RSPH or SOFHT) should cover most of the essential food hygiene issues.

Food Safety Management Systems

Food safety and hygiene regulations say that you must be able to show what you do to make sure that the food you provide for children and babies is safe to eat and that you must keep records. A simple pack, "Safer Food Better Business for Child-minders" (SFBB) has been produced by the Food Standards Agency to help you

demonstrate that you have a system to ensure that you produce safe food, and provide the necessary proof that you are using the system. You can obtain the pack free by downloading it from <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sfbb-childminders-pack.pdf>

The rest of this guidance contains some basic advice for the safe handling, preparation and serving of food, based on the format of the Safer Food Better Business pack.

What can go wrong?

There are four main areas to remember for good hygiene: Cross-contamination, Cleaning, Chilling and Cooking – we call them the 4 C's

Cross contamination

This is one of the most common causes of food poisoning and happens when harmful bacteria are spread onto food from other food, worktops, hands or equipment/utensils. These harmful bacteria often come from raw meat/poultry and eggs. Other sources of bacteria can include people, pests, pets, nappies and laundry. Some of the ways you can avoid this happening are:

Personal hygiene

- By practising good personal hygiene such as regular and thorough hand washing before and after preparing food, after handling rubbish, changing nappies, using the toilet, preferably using an antibacterial soap
- Wearing clean protective clothing when preparing food
- You should not work yourself if you are suffering from diarrhoea and sickness until you have been symptom free for 48 hours. Similarly you should not look after children if they are suffering from diarrhoea and sickness. This is because of the likelihood of spreading the illness by cross-contamination.

Food storage and Preparation

- It is important to store raw foods particularly raw meat, poultry fish and eggs away from cooked and ready to eat foods so that they do not become contaminated with the bacteria that may be on the raw foods
- Similarly vegetables should be stored apart as they may be contaminated with soil that can contain food poisoning germs. All fruit and vegetables should be washed with clean water before eating
- This separation should be maintained after storage by using separate equipment as far as possible, for preparing raw and cooked foods, or by thorough cleaning between uses. It is good practice to use different chopping

boards, for example, one for raw meat and poultry, another for raw vegetables and another for washed and ready to eat salads or fruit.

- If food, particularly raw meat and poultry are being defrosted, it should not be allowed to drip onto other ready to eat food. Ideally it should be put in the fridge in a container with a lip to hold any defrost liquid and be covered with a lid, cling film or foil. It is better to defrost food in a fridge to prevent food getting too warm on the outside while the centre is still frozen
- Nappy changing facilities should be separate from food preparation areas, and dirty laundry should not be brought into the kitchen when food preparation is carried out.
- Ideally pets and their feeding bowls should not be kept in the kitchen. But it is essential that pets are kept out of the kitchen when food is being prepared and that all food, dishes, and food preparation equipment is protected from contamination by pets and that all worktops are washed and disinfected before preparing food.

Allergies

- It is important to be aware of any allergies that the children in your care may have, and take precautions to minimise the exposure of the children to foods that might cause severe allergic reactions. You may need to separate ingredients; equipment and utensils used for preparing food for allergic children, and clean down before and after food preparation.

Pest control and chemical contamination

- You must be aware of the signs that show that you may have a problem with pests, and know what action to take, for example call the local authority pest control service or a private pest contractor
- Always follow the instructions on how to use and store chemicals correctly and ensure that they cannot be reached by children

Cleaning

Cleaning is important as it is the only way we can remove or reduce the harmful bacteria that have entered the kitchen and stop them spreading.

- Regularly wash or wipe, and then disinfect, all the items you touch frequently such as taps, handles, and switches
- Wash worktops, chopping boards and knives thoroughly before use, and wash and disinfect them after preparing raw meat, poultry or eggs
- To disinfect surfaces or touch points you will need to use an antibacterial cleaner, sanitiser, or very hot water (82°C). Detergents like washing up liquid will not disinfect surfaces, so normal washing up will not kill harmful bacteria or viruses. Washing off any dirt or food before applying a disinfectant is more

effective as the disinfectant or sanitiser will only work properly on a visually clean surface. This is called 2 stage cleaning. Some chemicals, like sanitisers, will clean and disinfect at the same time but you must follow the manufacturer's instructions especially if they give a contact time needed for the chemical to kill any bacteria or viruses. You will also need to use the product twice, once to remove the food or dirt and a second time to allow effective disinfection to occur.

- In order to be sure that the sanitiser or disinfectant you are using is effective enough, if used properly, to kill enough of the bacteria that remain on a surface after the first stage of cleaning, it must comply with one of two British Standards; BSEN 1276 or BSEN 13697. Products often do not state on the label whether this is the case and you cannot rely on general marketing claims e.g. "kills 99.9% of germs" The following link is to a website that is regularly updated and lists a range of products that are compliant with the required standards: <http://www.disinfectant-info.co.uk/>
- Ensure that all cloths used to wipe worktops, equipment and utensils, and tea towels and hand towels are clean – ideally disposable cloths that are used once and then thrown away reduce the possibility of spreading bacteria around the kitchen. If you do use reusable cloths you must ensure that they are washed at a temperature that will kill bacteria e.g. a boil wash
- As a childminder you may have to clear up vomit or diarrhoea from time to time. Do not use cloths used for food preparation and clean and disinfect the area thoroughly to avoid possible cross contamination

Cooking

- Cooking food to temperatures above 75°C for at least 30 seconds, all the way through will ensure that most harmful bacteria will be destroyed, you can check this by sticking a knife into the centre of dishes such as shepherd's pie or lasagne to check that they are steaming hot all the way through, or by cutting through the thickest part of any meat you are cooking
- If you are re-heating food, whether prepared in advance by yourself, or by a parent, you must heat the food up to 75°C again to ensure that it is safe to reserve. You may need to let it cool before serving to a child. You should only re-heat food once
- If you are cooking food that has been stored frozen, unless the manufacturer specifically states that you can cook from frozen, and gives instructions on how to cook safely, you should always ensure that the food is fully defrosted before you cook it. This is to make sure that the food actually reaches the correct cooking temperature all the way through

Chilling

- Some foods require that they be kept chilled in a fridge, this is because if left at room temperature they are the sort of foods that support the growth of bacteria – we call these “high risk” foods
- One of your regular checks should be that your fridge and freezer are working properly and are able to keep the food at the right temperatures, about 5°C for chilled food, and -18°C for frozen food. If your fridge or freezer does not have a digital display, you may wish to buy a thermometer to keep in the fridge/freezer. These can be purchased quite cheaply from a variety of high street or supermarket shops.
- These “high risk” foods tend to be the sorts of foods that have a “use by” date and they should not be eaten after that date, as they may not be safe to eat. There are some bacteria that can grow even at low temperatures, such as Listeria
- If you have cooked food that you will re-heat later, you should ensure that it is cooled as quickly as possible and transferred to a fridge or freezer within 90 minutes of cooking. If food is still too hot after 90 minutes you should consider ways to help it cool more rapidly, for example by dividing into smaller portions, or standing food in containers in clean, cold water to help it cool quicker. This is because bacteria can grow very quickly in warm food and some of them produce toxins that once in the food cannot be made safe by subsequent cooking.

For further information and guidance about food safety go to the Food Standards Agency website at www.food.gov.uk There is advice about starting a food business with specific information for child-minders; details about SFBB and the downloadable pack; information about food law inspections, and training courses.

Local information about those who provide food hygiene training is available on the Bristol City Council website on the Business tab of the Food Safety pages.