



Meal and Snack Preparation Guidelines

Prepared by the Health & Safety Specialists at Child Care Aware® of North Dakota

Clean and Sanitize

- Clean and sanitize table, counter, highchair trays, and any other surface used for food prep/service (ex. top of shelves) before and after all meals and snacks.

Process for washing/sanitizing surfaces:

- Spray surface with soap and water mixture or use clean washcloth with clean, warm, soapy water from faucet or in a bucket. If washcloth is used, it should only be used for one meal or snack. If a bucket of water is used, it should be emptied after one meal or snack time.
- Wipe surfaces with paper towel(s) if spray bottle is used.
- Spray surface with bleach solution labeled for food area, then wait 2 minutes. Follow manufacturer's product instructions if another sanitizer is used instead of bleach. Do not spray around children.
- Use paper towels to dry surface or completely air dry before use.

Wash Hands

- Staff and children should wash their hands with soap and water at a **clean sink** before setting table, preparing food/bottle, serving food/bottle, or eating.
** A "clean sink" is one that has been disinfected or is not used for handwashing after diapering or toileting.*
- Children should be seated immediately at the table or in a highchair after handwashing. Children should not touch or play with objects or toys after handwashing to prevent recontamination of hands.

Setting the Table

- Place food on a disposable barrier or dishware – not directly on the table or highchair tray.
**Napkins, Styrofoam cups/dishware and disposable utensils are not recommended to use with infants.
Styrofoam cups and disposal utensils are not recommended to use with toddlers.
- Programs that require a health inspection are required to handle food with serving utensils or wear food service gloves. Do not reuse gloves after they've been removed.
- Keep serving bowls/trays covered when not being used.
- Touch utensils at the handle and cups at the base to prevent contamination.

Mealtime Safety Reminders

- Prepare food in ¼ inch pieces for infants and ½ inch for toddlers to avoid choking.
- Test temperature of food and liquids before serving to children.
- Serve fluids in sippy cups or bottles that have been washed and sanitized between uses. Discard contents after feeding or meal.
- Baby food that is fed directly out of the jar should not be re-fed due to possible contamination with bacteria.
- If utensils/dishes/cups fall on the floor, replace with clean ones, or rinse before giving them back to the child.
- Always keep your eyes on the children when eating and, if possible, stay within arm's reach of the children in case of choking.
- Make sure children are sitting when eating or drinking. Always use safety straps in highchairs.
- If children fall asleep when eating, wake them up before laying them down to make sure they have swallowed all of the food in their mouth.

After Meal/Snack Clean Up

- Clean children's faces and hands with individual clean washcloths, as needed. Then wash children's hands with soap and water at a sink. Change children's clothing if soiled from eating.
- Clean floor right after meal or snack so young children are not tempted to eat food off the floor.
- Wash and sanitize tables, counter tops, highchair trays, and any other surface used for food.