

# Infant/Toddler Food Safety and Sanitation

*Keeping the youngest children safe!*



## Sources:

*Feeding Infants—A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Programs* USDA Team Nutrition  
*Handling and Preparing Baby Food, Breast Milk, and Infant Formula* —[www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org)  
*Nutrition and Wellness Tips—Provider Handbook for the CACFP*—USDA Team Nutrition  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
The Food and Drug Administration Outreach and Information Center—[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)  
Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

## Especially for the Youngest Children

Infants and toddlers are at high risk for contracting food borne illness because their immune systems are not well developed and cannot fight disease and illness as well as adults and older children.

Some harmful bacteria are killed by natural stomach acids, but because infants and young children produce less acid in their stomachs they can become sick more easily. Food borne illness can lead to serious complications and even death in young children.

Child care educators and families must take extra care when handling infant breast milk/formula, food, bottles, and utensils. The steps outlined in this training are accepted as best practice for preventing food borne illness.

### Hand Washing!

Proper hand washing is the cornerstone of preventing the spread of illness in the family child care home. Hand washing tips:



- ◆ Use a separate sink for hand washing after diapering/toileting from the sink used for food preparation.
- ◆ Wet hands with warm running water. Add liquid soap.
- ◆ Wash all surfaces on your hands for 20 seconds. Wash carefully between fingers and around the tops and palms of hand, over wrists, and under nails using a clean nail brush if needed.
- ◆ Rinse hands well under running water, leaving water running while drying hands.
- ◆ Dry hands using a clean disposable paper towel\*.
- ◆ Turn off the water using the paper towel.

When to wash your hands? Here is a list, although, it seems like all you do is wash hands!

Wash your hands **before** you:

- ✓ Bottle feed a baby.
- ✓ Handle, prepare, or touch baby bottles and food.
- ✓ Handle food utensils and set the table.
- ✓ Handle raw meat, poultry, or fish.
- ✓ Eat, drink, or feed food to babies and children.
- ✓ Put away clean dishes.
- ✓ Give any medication.

*\*The Department of Early Education and Care regulations allow the use of individual towels to dry hands. **These towels must be easy to identify for the individual and laundered daily.***

Wash your hands thoroughly **after** you:

- ✓ Come in from outside
- ✓ Handle raw meat, poultry, fish, or eggs
- ✓ Change a baby's or toddler's diaper and/or clothing
- ✓ Use the bathroom or assist a child in the bathroom
- ✓ Come in contact with bodily fluids (e.g. soiled diapers, vomit) even when using disposable gloves
- ✓ Sneezing or coughing
- ✓ Wiping noses, mouths, sores, or cuts
- ✓ Handling pets or other animals
- ✓ Giving medication

**Make sure you wash a baby's or toddler's hands before and after meals/snacks and after diaper changing:**

#### **Infants**

1. Clean the infant's hands thoroughly with a damp paper towel moistened with liquid soap.
2. Wipe hands from wrist to fingertips using a fresh paper towel moistened with clean water.
3. Dry the child's hands with a fresh paper towel.
4. Turn off the faucet with the paper towel and discard it.
5. Wash your own hands.

#### **Toddlers**

1. Have the child wet his or her hands. Make sure the water is not too hot.
2. Squirt a drop of liquid soap onto the child's hands.
3. Help the child wash all areas of the hands for 15 seconds.
4. Rinse child's hands from wrist to fingertips in running water.
5. Dry the child's hands with a fresh paper towel.
6. Turn off the faucet with the paper towel and discard it.
7. Wash your own hands.



Baby wipes are fine to use away from home or when clean water is not available, but wipes are not the preferred method for cleaning infant and toddler hands. As soon as an older infant or toddler is developmentally ready, hands should be washed at the sink under running water.



The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a baby bottle be washed thoroughly right after every feeding with hot water and soap, then allowed to dry thoroughly. This helps prevent the growth of bacteria, which thrives in water, leftover breast milk or any liquid.

### **Washing Bottles**

- Clean the sink before using.
- Use a sink stopper to hold hot water in the sink.
- Add dish detergent to hot water until water becomes soapy.
- Put bottles, nipples, caps, rings and preparation utensils into the hot soapy water.
- Use a bottle brush, rotating the brush inside the bottle until the bottle is clean.
- Wash away the soapy water under running water.
- Before cleaning nipples, let them sit in the soapy water for five to ten minutes.
- Use a nipple brush to wash nipples, including nipple holes.
- Squeeze the hot, soapy water through the nipple hole to flush out any trapped liquid.
- Wash caps, rings, and preparation utensils in the hot, soapy water.
- Rinse all utensils under running water to wash away all traces of soapy water.
- Use sanitized tongs to remove bottles, nipples and other utensils.
- Place components in a dish drainer to air dry.

### **Sterilize Bottles**

Sterilizing bottles is recommended for infants under 6 months and for all new bottles. Use the following stove-top method:

- Fill a large pot with water.
- Place the washed feeding and preparation equipment into the water.
- Make sure the equipment is completely covered with water.
- Cover the pot and bring to a rolling boil.
- Boil for 5 minutes.
- Remove with sanitized tongs and allow items to cool and air dry.

### **Breast Milk Storage**

Ask mothers to store pumped breast milk in clean glass or hard, BPA-free plastic bottles with tight fitting lids. Mothers may also use milk storage bags that are made for freezing human milk. *Never use disposable bottle liners or other plastic bags to store breast milk.*

- Make sure mothers label the bottles or bags with the date the milk was expressed and her child's name.
- Store breast milk immediately according to the chart on page 4.
- Have mothers bring bottles of fresh or frozen breast milk to your home in a cooler with an ice pack to keep the milk at 41° F.

### Guide to Storing Breast Milk

Place	Temperature	How Long
Countertop, table	Room Temperature (60° F—85° F)	No more than 2 hours
Refrigerator	41° F or colder	No more than 48 hours
Freezer	0° F or colder	No more than 6 months

### Guide for Storing Thawed Breast Milk

Room Temperature	Refrigerator	Freezer
60° F-85° F	39° F or colder	0° F or colder
No more than 1-2 hours	24 hours	DO NOT re-freeze

### Preparation

Wash hands before handling bottles of breast milk. Thaw a bottle of frozen breast milk:

- ✓ In the refrigerator
- ✓ Under cold running water
- Do not thaw frozen breast milk at room temperature or by heating on the stove or in the microwave.*

- ◆ If not using prefilled bottles, fill cleaned and sterilized bottles with the amount of breast milk the baby usually drinks at one feeding.
- ◆ Throw out breast milk that has a bad odor after thawing. It might be spoiled
- ◆ Breast milk does not have to be warmed, but the baby may prefer warm milk.
- ◆ To warm, hold the bottle under warm, running tap water or place the bottle in a warm bowl of water for no more than 15 minutes.
- ◆ **Never** warm breast milk in a microwave or by heating on the stove.
- ◆ Swirl the milk and test the temperature by dribbling some on your wrist. It should be comfortably warm, close to body temperature.

### Disposal

- ◆ After feeding, throw out any unused breast milk left in the bottle used.
- ◆ Unused breast milk may be returned to the parent at the end of the day as long as the baby was not fed directly from the bottle and proper storage is maintained.

## Infant Formula

### Storage

- ✓ Powdered infant formula must be tightly covered and stored in a cool, dry place and used within one month of opening.
- ✓ Never store powdered infant formula in the refrigerator as it can be exposed to water and temperature extremes that affect the quality of the powder before it is mixed.
- ✓ Opened cans of concentrated or ready-to-feed infant formula must be covered, refrigerated, and used within 48 hours.
- ✓ Do not freeze concentrated or ready-to-feed infant formula.

### Preparation

- ◆ Wash hands thoroughly, see page 1.
- ◆ Clean and sanitize the workspace. Clean area with hot, soapy water. Sanitize space by spraying with a sanitizing solution\* and allowing to air-dry.
- ◆ Clean and sterilize bottles, see page 3.
- ◆ Thoroughly rinse the formula container lid and can opener before opening a can of formula to minimize contamination.
- ◆ If using ready-to-feed formula, shake the can well before opening, and pour the amount of formula needed for one feeding into a sterilized bottle.
- ◆ Never add new formula to a partially consumed bottle.
- ◆ If using powdered formula, prepare the formula according to the manufacturer's directions.
- ◆ Attach the nipple and ring to the bottle and shake well. Feed the baby the prepared formula immediately.
- ◆ If more than one bottle is prepared, put a clean nipple right side up on each bottle and cover with a nipple cap.
- ◆ Label each bottle with the baby's name and the date and time the bottle was prepared.
- ◆ Do not leave formula at room temperature—Put in the refrigerator.
- ◆ **Never use formula that is past the expiration date on the package.**
- ◆ To warm a bottle, hold the bottle under warm, running tap water or place in a bowl of warm water no longer than 15 minutes. **Never use a microwave oven for warming infant formula.**
- ◆ Shake the bottle before testing the temperature. Dribble some formula on your wrist to make sure it's not too hot.

### Disposal

- ◆ Throw out leftover formula in the bottle after the feeding.
- ◆ Infant formula that is removed from the refrigerator must be used within 2 hours or be discarded.

\* *The most cost-effective food surface sanitizer is a mixture of 1/4 teaspoon un-scented bleach in 1 quart water put in a clean spray bottle. This solution must be made daily, as bleach loses effectiveness when mixed. This mixture will not leave an unsafe residue when allowed to air dry.*

## Baby Food



### Preparation

- ◆ Wash hands thoroughly, see page 1.
- ◆ Clean and sanitize the workspace. Clean area with hot, soapy water. Sanitize space by spraying with a sanitizing solution (\*see page 4) and allowing to air-dry.
- ◆ If feeding using commercially prepared baby food jars, thoroughly rinse the lid of the container with warm water before opening.
- ◆ If feeding home prepared foods, make sure you are following food safety best practices that include using separate cutting boards for vegetables/fruits from meats.
- ◆ Never add honey to a baby's food because of the risk of infant botulism (under 1 year of age)
- ◆ Certain vegetables such as carrots, beets, turnips, spinach, and collard greens are not to be fed to children under age 6 months. The naturally large amounts of nitrates and nitrites in these foods may make a younger baby ill.
- ◆ Select good quality fresh vegetables/fruits or plain frozen vegetables/fruits without added salt, sugar, or sauces.
- ◆ Unprocessed, lean meat and poultry are preferable when the baby is developmentally ready. Begin with strained or pureed well-cooked meats. As the baby matures, meat and poultry may be ground or finely chopped.
- ◆ Do not feed any shellfish, including shrimp, lobster, crab, and scallops. These types of seafood can cause allergic reactions in some children.
- ◆ Do not feed a baby the following fish which may contain high levels of harmful mercury: swordfish, shark, king mackerel, or tilefish.

### Heating

- ◆ Heat only if the baby prefers warm baby food.
- ◆ Place food for one serving in a microwave safe dish and heat in a microwave oven.
- ◆ Stir the food thoroughly to ensure that it is heated evenly with no hot spots.
- ◆ Always test the temperature of the food before serving.

### Storage

- ◆ To prevent contamination from the child's saliva, use a clean spoon to put a portion of the baby food into a clean dish.
- ◆ Do not serve the child directly from the baby food jar or container
- ◆ Refrigerate un-served portions in the original container or jar at 41° F or below. If the container is not re-sealable, store in a clean sealable container.
- ◆ Before refrigerating leftover baby food, label the jar with the child's name and time opened.
- ◆ Keep a permanent marker and masking tape by the refrigerator to make labeling easy.

## Baby Food Storage (continued)

- ◆ Observe the use-by-date for shelf storage of unopened jars of baby food to ensure safety.
- ◆ Store unopened jars and containers of baby food in a cool dry cabinet or pantry on shelves at least 6 inches from the floor.
- ◆ Rotate stored jars to use previously purchased foods prior to newly purchased.

## Disposal

- ◆ Throw out any unused refrigerated baby food within 2 days, except for baby food meats and egg yolks which should be used within 24 hours.
- ◆ Throw out any uneaten baby food leftover in the dish after feeding.

## Sippy Cups

Using a sippy cup may seem easy, but there are some cautions to consider:

- Due to concern of harmful chemicals, manufacturers of baby bottles and sippy cups stopped using bisphenol A (BPA) in 2009. Look for BPA-free labels.
- To be extra safe, don't let a child drink from a cup that is scratched or damaged.
- A worn cup with scratches is more likely to harbor bacteria and, if the cup contains BPA, may release small amounts of the chemical.



## Best Practices for Health and Safety

- ✓ Never let a child take a sippy cup of juice or milk to bed. The sugars can pool in her mouth and cause tooth decay.
- ✓ Do not allow a toddler to walk around with a cup in hand, drinking from it over time. The sugars from the juice or milk has continuous contact with her teeth.
- ✓ Liquid can easily become trapped in the nooks and crannies of a sippy cup and valve, leading to the growth of bacteria and mold.
- ✓ If you can't wash a sippy cup right away, at least rinse well under running water, draining any remaining liquid and taking the cup apart.
- ✓ Periodically check all the lids and valves for damage and mold and dispose as needed.

## Cleaning Sippy Cups

If children in your care use sippy cups, especially the type designed to be spill-free, you have probably encountered the “ooey-gooey” gunk that can get stuck inside the small valves, straws and other parts. This can be dangerous, since bacteria and mold love spaces like this and thrive in milky or sugary environments.



You have the option of using disposable cups or throwing out the valves and replacing. These options are expensive and hard on the environment. Here are some tips to keep the cups clean:

### Use a Dental Brush

- It's hard to find a bottle brush for the small parts of the cups.
- Check out dental brushes sold in the toothbrush section of your market. Soaking the cup in hot soapy water first makes using the brush easier.

### Use Bottle Sterilization

- Fill a large pot with water.
- Place washed sippy cup parts into the water.
- Make sure the cup parts are completely covered with water.
- Cover the pot and bring to a rolling boil.
- Boil for 5 minutes.
- Remove with sanitized tongs and allow items to cool and air dry.

### Use the Dishwasher

- Dishwashers may clean sippy cups adequately if your hot water settings are high enough. If you have turned down your hot water to reduce the risk of scalding, your dishwasher may not be hot enough to clean irregular surfaces like sippy cup parts.
- If your dishwasher has a sanitizer feature, that should make the water hot enough.
- In any case, if you use your dishwasher, consider using a dishwasher basket so that small parts don't drop to the bottom of the dishwasher and melt in the heating element.

## Choking Risks

Reducing the risk of choking is another food safety concern that impacts infants toddlers, and young children. Children under the age of 4 years are at the highest risk of choking on both food and not food items. There are many foods that increase the risk of choking.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) policy does not allow the following foods to be served to children under 3 years of age due to the high risk of choking:

- Hot dogs (frankfurters)
- Grapes
- Nuts
- Nut butters including peanut butter
- Dried fruits

*Along with the above, avoid serving foods that are round, tube-shaped, small, hard, thick and sticky, smooth, slippery, or easily molded to stick in the airway.* The above list from ESE addresses these problematic food textures, sizes, and shapes; however, educators and families need to be aware that many other foods can be hazardous, such as:

- Any round food that is as wide as a nickel, which is about the size of a very young child's throat.
- Whole pieces of canned fruit.
- Popcorn.
- Pieces of raw vegetables.
- Hard round candy and jelly beans.
- Marshmallows and chewing gum.

Let's examine some ways to reduce the risk of choking while children are eating. You can minimize the risk by:

- ✓ Making sure that children are seated upright when eating. Keep mealtimes calm and away from distractions, such as TV, loud music, and other activities.
- ✓ Sitting with children and actively supervising:
  - Watch children for "squirreling" of several pieces of food in their mouth.
  - Remember a choking child may not make any noise, so adults should be watching for other signs of a problem.
- ✓ Offering plenty of liquids to children when eating, but make sure that liquids and solids are not swallowed at the same time.
- ✓ Not allowing children to continue to feed themselves, or be assisted with feeding once they begin to fall asleep.

- ✓ Infants must be held while fed a bottle.
- ✓ Encourage children to eat slowly. Teach children to eat one bite at a time and chew and swallow food before talking.
- ✓ Make sure menu items reflect developmental abilities. You can serve shredded carrots instead of baby carrots. Mash the sweet potatoes instead of serving in chunks.
- ✓ Avoid eating “on the run” in the car. A driver, who maybe the only adult in the car, cannot help a choking child while driving.
- ✓ Remember, foods do not contain warning labels about possible choking hazards.

### Non-Food Choking Risks



You may need to get on the floor at a child’s eye level in order to see that small items have not been left out, such as jewelry, coins, marbles, stones, and small toy parts. Of all children’s products, latex balloons are the leading cause of non-food choking death and most of the fatalities are for children younger than 6 years old.

- ✓ Regularly check toys for damage that may have created loose, small parts. Throw away any damaged or dangerous toys.
- ✓ Purchase a small parts testing tube to determine whether toys and objects in your home may present a hazard to infants, toddlers, and young children.
- ✓ Sign up to receive product recalls with the Consumer Product Safety Commission at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

### Recent High-Risk Product

Laundry and dishwasher detergent pods are a new product in the US market place that are posing a very high risk to young children as they look just like candy! While government agencies work with manufacturers to improve packaging, all educators and families need to be aware of the danger to young children these products pose.



Poison centers are reporting an increase of calls about exposure of children to these detergent pods packaged in a “single-dose” packet. Not only a choking hazard, these products have burst in toddlers mouths, and been swallowed. This has caused an array of scary symptoms. As with all your cleaning products, make sure they are kept locked and out of the reach of young children. Keep the poison control phone number handy: 1-800-222-1222.



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**February 2015**

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