

Together We Can Build Food-Safe Schools!

Strategy Sheet

Strategies for Teachers

When students regularly eat nutritious meals, they are more alert and focused in the classroom. Ensuring that these meals are safe also is critical to classroom success. Unsafe food can adversely affect students' health and increase absenteeism. As a teacher, you are in a unique position – you can influence your students' attitudes about food safety to keep them healthy every day!

Food-safe schools adopt a school-wide approach to food safety, and, with the help of partners in the school community, can create a culture of food safety. Food-safe schools address a broad range of topics beyond the scope of what may be required by legislation. This starts with building and supporting strong food safety policies and procedures, and continues with education and training. Partners can help achieve the ultimate goal of making food safety second nature to everyone in the school community, thus creating a culture of food safety.

Teachers Are Essential to Creating a Culture of Food Safety

- You are among the most important role models and sources of information for your students.
- You are in an excellent position to help children understand the importance of food safety and to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to handle food safely.
- The knowledge you provide can help decrease the number of students who become sick from foodborne illness.

Thinking About Food Safety

- Do your students know how to properly wash their hands and why handwashing is important?

- Do you encourage your students to wash their hands before they eat?
- Do you encourage your students to wash their hands after using the restroom and after recess?
- Are you responsible for handling or serving food in your classroom?
- If you could take some steps to enhance food safety, what would they be?
- How can the school nutrition team help you take those steps?

Take Action!

- Encourage proper handwashing. Proper handwashing is critical to food safety and illness prevention and should be encouraged, particularly after students use the restroom and before they eat. Teach your students how to properly wash their hands and allow time for handwashing before and after meals. Remember, hand sanitizers have their place, but the best practice is still good, old-fashioned handwashing!
- Be a food safety role model. Demonstrate good food safety practices in the classroom. Always wash your hands before handling or serving food, and never handle food directly with your bare hands (use gloves or utensils). Monitor food temperatures to prevent harmful bacteria from growing in food. Your school nutrition team can help you understand safe holding times and temperatures for food.
- Include food safety in your lessons. Use existing food safety curricula or incorporate aspects of food safety, such as taking food temperatures, into science or math classes. ■