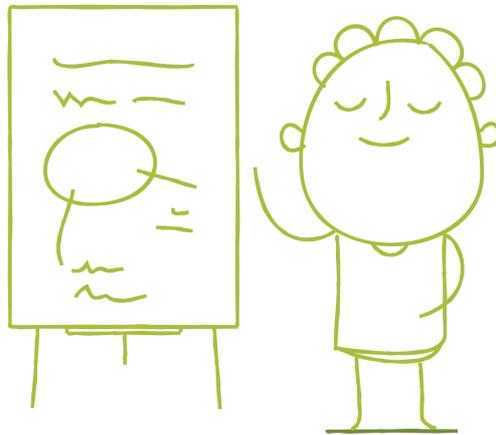


CARE CERTIFICATE

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

STANDARD 8 Fluids and nutrition



Food handling

As a support worker, you may need to prepare food, so you will need an understanding of how to handle food safely.

In the UK, there are millions of cases of food poisoning every year. Food poisoning occurs when people eat food that has been contaminated with harmful germs (bacteria and viruses) or toxins (poisonous substances).

Bacteria need warmth and moisture to grow. They reproduce by dividing themselves, so one bacterium becomes two and then two become four and so on. In the right conditions one bacterium could become several million in 8 hours and thousands of millions in 12 hours.

This means that if a food is contaminated with a small number of bacteria and you leave it out of the fridge overnight, it could be seriously contaminated by the next day. Just one mouthful could make someone ill. If you put food in the fridge it will stop bacteria from multiplying.

Since you can't see, taste or smell bacteria, the only way that you can be sure that food is safe is to follow good food hygiene at all times.

Safe food handling can be broken down into four key areas: cleaning, cooking, chilling and cross-contamination.

Cleaning

Effective kitchen cleanliness is essential to stop the spread of harmful bacteria.

Often bacteria can collect in places that you might not expect. Anything that has been in contact with food or people's hands could be covered in bacteria. Bacteria hotspots include fridge/freezer handles, tap handles, work surfaces, chopping boards, bin lids and can openers.

Cloths used to clean dishes and surfaces, and tea towels, can also spread bacteria. Make sure you wash and dry them thoroughly and replace them regularly, particularly when they are worn or damaged. Use paper towels or disposable cloths wherever possible.

Cooking

Thoroughly cooking is very important because it kills harmful bacteria in food. If bacteria survive in food because it isn't cooked or reheated properly, it could make service user's ill. Only serve properly cooked food and serve food straight after it has been cooked or reheated. Inspect the food you are serving. Make sure it is piping hot all the way through and meat juices run clear.

Chilling

Some foods need to be kept chilled to keep them safe, e.g. food with a 'Use by' date, food that you have cooked but don't serve immediately, or other ready-to-eat food. If these foods are not properly chilled, bacteria can grow and make people ill.

Cross-contamination

Cross-contamination is when bacteria spread between food, surfaces or equipment. It is most likely to happen when raw food touches or drips onto other food, equipment or surfaces and when people touch raw food with their hands.

So, if raw meat drips onto a cake in the fridge, bacteria will spread from the meat to the cake. If you cut raw meat on a chopping board, bacteria will spread from the meat to the board and knife. If you then use this board and knife to chop a cucumber, the bacteria will spread from the board and knife to the cucumber.

Hands can spread bacteria. If you touch raw food and don't wash your hands thoroughly you spread bacteria to other things you touch. By avoiding cross-contamination, you can stop bacteria spreading. Good practice includes keeping raw and ready to eat foods separate, cleaning surfaces and equipment thoroughly before you start to prepare food and after preparation of raw food, and washing your hands thoroughly after touching raw food.

Nutrition and hydration

Eating a healthy, balanced diet can help to prevent serious conditions such as heart disease and stroke. It is important to eat a variety of foods and to get the right balance between how much is eaten and how much exercise is taken.

Starchy foods (carbohydrates) such as pasta, rice and potatoes should form the basis of meals. Wholegrain types should be eaten as much as possible. Starchy foods provide lots of energy, as well as fibre and a range of nutrients.

Five portions of fruit and vegetables should be eaten each day. Dried, tinned and frozen types all count as well as fresh.

A healthy diet should also include some protein rich foods. Good sources of protein include fish, meat, eggs and pulses. Lean cuts of meat, grilled rather than fried, contain less fat. Dairy products such as milk, yoghurt and cheese form part of a balanced diet.

As people get older, their food and nutritional needs change. They do not burn calories as quickly as they did when they were younger and more active.

This doesn't mean that older people do not need a good diet – they need just as good a diet as any other age group. They need the same amount of vitamins, minerals and protein that they needed when they were younger. They need even more vitamins, minerals and protein when they are sick or unwell. They also need fibre from breads, cereals, fruits and vegetables to prevent constipation.

The human body is made mostly of water. Water makes up about 2/3 of the body's weight. Water is needed to control the temperature of the body, to keep all body cells alive and to keep the blood flowing. As a person gets older, the amount of water that is found in the body gets smaller.

Poor nutrition and hydration

Poor nutrition and hydration can lead to a number of health problems. Individuals will lose weight and become malnourished if they do not get a good diet. They will also be dehydrated if they do not get enough fluids. They will get weak, less able to fight off an infection or illness.

People will become dehydrated if they take in less fluid than the body needs to perform its functions. When a person is dehydrated, the whole body is affected.

Although some older people may gain weight from eating too much, most older people are at risk of losing weight. They may lose weight without wanting to. This loss of weight can cause them to be weak and ill.

- Possible causes of malnutrition and/or dehydration include illness, depression, side effects of medication (nausea, vomiting, sleepiness), swallowing disorders, mouth problems (tooth loss, ill-fitting dentures, mouth ulcers), tremors/shakiness which affects a person's ability to feed themselves.
- Possible signs of malnutrition include weight loss, sunken eyes, skin breaking down, confusion, irritability, sleepiness, anxiety, dizziness, infections and sores, thin hair, cracks around the mouth, pale looking lips or mouth, ill-fitting dentures, muscle weakness (perhaps due to lack of mobility, which increases risk of falls), pneumonia, illness caused by exposure to bacteria or viruses.
- Possible signs of dehydration include sunken eyes, dry skin, skin that is loose, dry mouth and tongue, fever, nausea, vomiting, lack of appetite, weakness,

lack of appetite, constipation, low blood pressure, weak/fast pulse rate, dark urine, amount of urine produced is less than normal, dizziness when going from a lying to standing position, weight loss.

Promoting nutrition and hydration

You can encourage and promote adequate nutrition and hydration by supporting service users to be as independent as possible – encourage them to make choices about food and support them to buy the food and drink they prefer.

Other ways of encouraging nutrition and hydration include:

- Providing adapted plates, cups straws and utensils if needed.
- Ensuring fluids and healthy snacks are available – remember, some people prefer small meals more often during the day instead of three big meals.
- Encouraging good mouth and tooth care.
- Promoting the use of spices, low sodium salt and other flavourings to improve the taste of food.
- Encouraging social activities which include eating and drinking, such as meals out with family / friends etc.
- Supporting the use of prescribed supplements and vitamins
- Monitoring, reporting and documenting how much food or food is taken when relevant.
- Checking whether service users have any problems with dentures, mouth sores, chewing or swallowing.
- Ensuring a person has enough time to eat and isn't being rushed
- If appropriate, weighing service users or supporting them to weigh themselves. Accurate weights are one way to find out if a person is losing weight because they're not eating enough food.
- Supporting service users to serve food at the right temperature.