

## **INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL POLICY AND PROCEDURES** **Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (The Trust)**

### **IPC7**

### **FOOD HYGIENE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Food Safety Act 1990 (as amended) and The Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995 are designed to ensure that premises where food is prepared are clean and properly maintained and that the handling and storage of food is safe.

#### **AIM**

The danger of food borne illness posed to service users will be reduced with the proper implementation of a system of identifying and controlling food safety risks and the appropriate training of staff handling food.

These guidelines are intended for use in ward kitchen areas / residential homes and in any kitchen area, including Activities of Daily Living kitchens, where food is stored and served.

#### **BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF FOOD HYGIENE**

- There should be a designated hand wash basin in all ward kitchen areas with liquid soap and paper hand towels.
- There should be adequate provision of kitchen equipment, crockery, cutlery and adequate facilities for the handling and distribution, preparation and storage of food.
- Food purchased for service user consumption is of a good and wholesome quality and is stored, prepared, cooked and served in hygienic conditions.
- All staff engaged in food preparation or handling should have at least a basic knowledge of food hygiene practices. Food handlers must receive adequate supervision, instruction and training in food hygiene in keeping with their role.
- All Trust kitchen areas should be suitably maintained to ensure that thorough cleaning can be carried out.

## **COMMON CAUSES OF FOOD BORNE ILLNESS**

The following represents the most common causes of food poisoning which staff should take steps to avoid when preparing or handling food:-

- Food prepared too far in advance
- Food stored at room temperature
- Cooling food too slowly before refrigeration
- Not re-heating food to 70°C
- Cooked food contaminated with bacteria
- Undercooking meat and meat products
- Incomplete thawing of frozen meat and poultry
- Cross-contamination from raw to cooked food
- Storing hot food below 63°C
- Infected or contaminated food handlers
- Poor compliance with strict hand hygiene practices when dealing with all aspects of food

## **PRINCIPLES OF FOOD HYGIENE**

All staff preparing food should observe the following:

- Wash hands before and after preparing food, before serving meals and after using the toilet. Ensure cuts or sores/open wounds are covered with a waterproof dressing.
- A clean plastic disposable apron should be worn when handling or serving food.
- There should be no smoking around a food area. Never cough or sneeze over food.
- Keep all kitchen surfaces meticulously clean
- Keep open 'dry' food items e.g. cereals in pest proof containers
- Ensure refrigerators and freezers maintain the correct temperature (below 5°C for fridges -18°C for freezers). Check temperatures daily and maintain written record. An appropriate fridge thermometer should be in situ in all sites where service user food is stored.
- Keep raw and cooked food separate, including in the preparation stages. Use separate areas and utensils.

- Observe the 'best by' 'use by' advice on packaging. Keep food for as short a time as possible.
- Cook food thoroughly.
- Eat cooked food as soon as possible. If there is a long delay between preparing and eating the food it should be discarded.
- Service user meals must not be re-heated in microwave ovens.
- Food purchased and brought in by relatives should be properly packaged, covered, labelled and the name of the service user and the date opened clearly visible. Food items should be consumed within twenty-four hours.

## **ICE MACHINES**

Ice made from ice making machines in clinical settings has been implicated in episodes of cross-infection. The use and maintenance of these machines therefore must be closely controlled. They may become contaminated for a variety of reasons, including unhygienic manipulation by users, contamination of the water supply or environmental contamination within the ice machine itself or during storage of ice.

## **WATER COOLERS**

There may be hazards associated with the use of water coolers, for example bacterial contamination of the bottled water, contamination of the cooler picked up from the hospital environment or contamination from users' hands. To reduce risks associated with infection, all water coolers should obtain the water supply directly from the water mains.

## **PURCHASING ICE MACHINES AND WATER COOLERS**

There should be a contract, purchased at the time of the order, with the manufacturer for the cleaning and servicing of both ice machines and water coolers. Any contract should provide for

- Regular cleaning of the system by the contractor.
- Regular de-scaling of the unit.
- Decontamination procedures for the above.

The most appropriate choice of ice machine in the hospital setting is one that operates an automatic hands free system. Wherever possible water coolers should be of the type that are plumbed directly into the mains water supply. The Procurement Department must be consulted regarding selection and appropriateness of equipment.

## **THE USE AND MAINTENANCE OF ICE MACHINES AND WATER COOLERS**

### **ICE MACHINES – all types**

- All staff must wash their hands prior to handling ice for service users' consumption.
- There should be no unnecessary items placed on or around the unit, which may hinder proper ventilation and encourage contamination of the machine.
- The machine must be cleaned and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions. All cleaning regimes carried out by Trust staff must be documented and kept with the machine.

### **ICE MACHINES – non-hands free system**

- Ice from non-hands free systems should not be used for service user consumption. Ice may be used for clinical activities i.e. physiotherapy.
- Ice should only be removed using the scoop provided.
- The scoop should be washed daily in detergent and hot water or in a dishwasher daily and stored dry on a hook next to the machine.
- The door to the ice storage bin should be kept closed when not in use to avoid dust contamination.

### **WATER COOLERS**

- Water coolers should be sited in a cool place away from direct sunlight.
- All persons using the cooler should wash their hands prior to use.
- Once the water bottle is empty it should not be removed from the base until a replacement bottle is available and ready to use.
- The outside of the machine and drip tray should be cleaned daily with hot water and detergent.
- A record of cleaning and maintenance should be kept with the machine.
- Service user access should be controlled in clinical areas.