

Management of Staff Food and Beverages In Health Care Environments

The following guidelines have been developed to support the safe management of staff food and beverages in health care environments. In addition to normal restrictions regarding the consumption of food and beverages in specific areas, the following requirements are now in place:

1. Physical distancing protocols must be practiced in all meeting rooms, staff lounges and lunch rooms:
 - Place signs with suggested maximum persons per room
 - Wherever possible, re-arrange or decrease seating in staff areas to adhere to appropriate distancing
 - Consider altered meal break times for staff or using alternate unused space to meet physical distancing requirements, i.e. unused meeting rooms
2. Proper hand hygiene protocols must be followed at all times.
3. Clean and disinfect any surfaces you touch in common areas before and after eating using soap, water and paper towel or the provided cleaning/disinfectant product i.e. if touching any shared condiments (saltshaker, ketchup etc.).

Personal Staff Food in Staff lounge/Lunch Room

- Staff can continue to bring their own personal food and related supplies for their shift.
- Personal food can be stored in staff fridges and used in microwaves available for staff use. Containers and lunch bags placed in fridges and microwaves must be made of a material that can be easily cleaned.
- Staff in PCH's and Acute Facilities: Staff are responsible to bring their own supplies, including dishes, condiments and napkins etc. for personal use. Staff must bring their personal food and related supplies home at the end of their shift to clean.
- Staff in Community Settings and Corporate offices: Staff are responsible to bring their personal lunch bags/food for the day, and must bring them home at the end of their shift to clean. Staff are responsible to bring their own condiments, clearly label them, ensure there is adequate space in the fridge to store them, and ensure there is a regular weekly cleaning of the fridge.
- If items are purchased from Nutrition and Food Services, supplies will be provided with that purchase as per normal practice.
- Staff are to keep their lunch bags clean. Lunch bags should be scrubbed with soap and water and left to dry as needed. Staff are to ensure their hands are clean when touching their lunch bag (preparing, transporting etc.).
- Individual staff beverage containers are permitted in the health care environment however, they must not be used for direct access to water, ice and coffee dispensers. Clean facility beverage containers must be used to access water, ice and coffee dispensers.
- All individual staff members to use soap and water/food-grade safe detergent/disinfectant to clean high-touch areas in addition to the housekeeping/Nutrition Food Services scheduled cleaning. High-touch areas include but not limited to the table, microwave handle and keypad/knobs, counter, fridge handle and cupboard handles.

Food Brought in by Staff for Staff Sharing

- The staff member bringing in the food must maintain clean food preparation practices and wash surfaces and hands prior to preparing food and managing food containers.
- These steps are observed:
 1. All staff must perform hand hygiene prior to handling food and food containers.
 2. The container is immediately delivered to the appropriate area for staff consumption.
 3. Food intended for more than one staff member:
 1. Hand hygiene is performed by all staff prior to handling or eating food.
 2. One individual staff member to portion and serve food, while maintaining physical distancing, **OR**
 3. Have separate utensils for every person to serve themselves.
 4. All staff are responsible to clean the food supplies and high touch surfaces before leaving the room.
 5. The staff member bringing in the food is responsible to take the container home at the end of their shift.

External Food Deliveries for Staff

These guidelines apply to individual staff and staff group food deliveries and corporate or restaurant donations for staff.

- One entrance is to be designated for staff food deliveries.
- Staff should inform the food provider of the entrance to be used for delivery
- These steps are observed:
 1. Prior to receipt of food delivery, staff must perform hand hygiene. Physical distancing must be maintained at the hand off.
 2. A minimum number of staff should remove food from outer transport container/warmer/bag (dispose or return to the delivery person as appropriate).
 3. Move container to an appropriate area for consumption (normal restrictions regarding food and beverage consumption in specific work areas continue to apply).
 4. Hand hygiene is performed by all staff prior to handling or eating food.
 5. Food intended for more than one staff member: one individual staff member to portion and serve food, while maintaining physical distancing, OR have separate utensils for every person to serve themselves.
 6. Staff are responsible for cleaning food supplies and high-touch surfaces before leaving the room.

Catering for Meetings

There will be three service options:

- Cafeteria walk-thru
- Catered service – individually packaged/portioned
- Catered service - bulk

Connect with the Manager – Nutrition Food Services at the site to confirm which options are available.

For catered service – bulk:

- Hand hygiene is performed by all staff prior to handling or eating food.
- One individual staff member to portion and serve food to meeting attendees, while maintaining physical distancing. **OR**
- Have separate utensils for every person to serve themselves.

Shared Beverage Containers (coffee/tea/water)

- One individual staff member, after having performed hand hygiene, to serve the beverages to meeting attendees, while maintaining physical distancing. **OR**
- If every person serving themselves, hand hygiene is performed prior to and after handling shared beverage containers.

All staff are responsible to clean the food supplies and high touch surfaces before leaving the room.

Change Log:

December 8 – Changes relating to dishes, condiments and supplies needing to be brought in by staff and no longer provided by Nutrition Food Services in Staff rooms.

May 2, 2022 – Changes related to PCH's and Acute Facilities, Community Settings and Corporate Offices for personal food, supplies brought in for staff fridges. Changed the title and purpose of the guideline to be more generic for all IPC practices, not to be inclusive of COVID19 alone.