

Food Sharing

Site Applicability

All Providence Health Care (PHC) sites

Practice Level

All PHC staff

Need to Know

Purpose:

To provide infection prevention and control recommendations on food sharing amongst healthcare staff in PHC settings.

Background:

Celebrations, team meetings, team building and staff engagement activities can often be social events where food is shared amongst staff. Staff health and safety must be considered.

Guideline

Food Sharing

- Follow [safe food handling practices](#)
- Hand Hygiene is required before eating or handling food
- During cluster or outbreak, restrictions on staff food sharing may be implemented at the advice of IPAC, OHS and/or public health/MHO
- Food items purchased same day from a licensed food service establishment (e.g. restaurant, caterer, grocery store etc.) are preferred
- Individually wrapped foods or food items that have a designated individual serving (e.g. muffin) are preferred
- Food items should be arranged in a manner to allow staff to easily select their individual serving
- Food items that require communal serving utensil, e.g. whole cake, pizza, pasta, etc., are to be dispensed into individual bowls/plates/bags/portions at time of serving
 - Hand Hygiene is required before and after use of a communal serving utensil
- Leftovers must be taken home at the end of shift or discarded
- Ensure cleanliness is maintained and waste is placed into appropriate waste containers to avoid odors and vermin etc.

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- Any concerns about staff health and safety, please contact Occupational Health and Safety at OHS@providencehealth.bc.ca

Choosing an appropriate location

- Ensure alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) is available where food is being served and consumed
- No food should be served in patient care areas, medication room, clean supply, clean or soiled utility or staffing workspaces including the care team/nursing station
- Provide suitable space to allow for adequate personal space and ventilation

Foods to avoid

- Do not bring high-risk foods for sharing into a healthcare setting as these pose an increased risk of foodborne illness, this includes:
 - Uncooked eggs, seafood, shellfish and raw sprouts
 - Ready-to-eat packaged cold meats, meat spreads or seafood platters
 - Unpasteurized milk
 - Home-canned foods and leftovers

Further Concerns

- Any concerns about staff health and safety, please contact Occupational Health and Safety at OHS@providencehealth.bc.ca

Related Documents

- [B-00-11-10191](#) – Hand Hygiene (Policy)
- [Food Safety: Easy Ways to Make Food Safer](#)
- [Food Safety: Cooking](#)
- [Food Safety: Serving](#)
- [Food Safety \(BCCDC\)](#)

References

BCCDC. Food Safety. Available from <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/prevention-public-health/food-safety>

Health Canada. General Food Safety Tips. Available from <https://www.canada.ca/en/healthcanada/services/general-food-safety-tips.html>

Vancouver Coastal Health. (2022). Decorations, Costumes, Food, Celebrations, & Donations. Available from: http://ipac.vch.ca/Documents/Acute%20Resource%20manual/Guidelines_Decorations_Costumes_Food_Celebrations_Donations.pdf

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