



## FACTOID 5: SAFE FOOD HANDLING

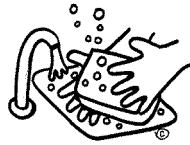
Healthy Meetings Checklist Item: *Is safe food handling practiced?*

*Instead of having food at midmorning or mid-afternoon meetings, presentations and seminars, try offering only beverages or taking a physical activity break instead.*

Safe food handling must be practiced. Remember to clean, separate, chill, and serve “lower risk” foods.

### Clean is the key

Keep everything clean: preparation surfaces, serving containers and utensils, foods, and hands. Wash your hands before handling foods for setup, serving and cleanup and before eating.



### Separate to prevent contamination

Have easy to use serving utensils like tongs or spoons to prevent the use of hands. Provide “squeeze bottles” for dips and dressings to prevent “double-dipping.” Offer “individually wrapped” foods when possible. Keep vermin (ants, flies, roaches) out of food and use covered serving dishes whenever possible.

### Keep it cool

Serve foods that are safe at room temperature, like whole grain crackers and pretzels, or those that are easy to keep cool. Put containers of cold foods (cut fruit and vegetables, dips and sauces) on a tray of ice or over cold packs.

### Serve “lower risk” foods

Plan food selections by keeping ease and risk in mind. Cooked foods that need to be kept hot and contain milk, egg, meat, poultry, seafood, bean or cooked rice can be risky. Raw sprouts are another food considered to be risky. Choose whole foods to minimize preparation and the need for temperature control. Whole apples, oranges, or bananas require only rinsing with clean water. Individually prepackaged items are convenient and require minimal handling.

### Consider not offering food at midmorning or mid-afternoon meetings, presentations and seminars

We are surrounded by food and live in a food-saturated environment. With the increasing rates of overweight and obesity, ask yourself if it is necessary to always provide food. A physical activity break with water as the only beverage goes a long way to increase energy levels during meetings and seminars. Create a *new* “norm”: food does not have to be central to everything.



Visit our Nutrition Education for Wellness (NEW) website at [www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/NEW](http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/NEW)