

Safety Note #181

Guidance for Food Preparation and Managing Employee Illness



Many ANR employees or volunteers, such as Nutrition Educators or other staff, may prepare or handle food as part of their duties, in educational programs, demonstrations, or other activities. These employees may not be considered “Foodservice Workers” under the definitions of the California Retail Food Code, however, they are required to follow good food safety practices and the risk of spreading disease from ill workers must be managed. This Safety Note is based on guidance from the California Department of Public Health for retail food facilities, and should be followed for ANR activities where food is prepared or handled.

Supervisors should discuss the following symptoms and restrictions with employees or volunteers who prepare or handle food as part of their duties. Employees or volunteers who have food handling duties must report these symptoms or illnesses to their supervisor and supervisors must take steps to ensure that food safety practices are maintained.

If an employee or volunteer has:	Action:	Return to work :
Flu-like symptoms (cough, sore throat, fever, or runny nose), or has been diagnosed with any type of influenza; <u>and</u> the symptoms cannot be controlled by medication	The employee or volunteer is <u>restricted</u> from contact with exposed food, linens, utensils, or food-related supplies and equipment	When employee or volunteer has been asymptomatic for at least 24 hours
Vomiting, diarrhea or other gastrointestinal illness symptoms		When wounds/sores are covered with waterproof bandage or healed
Open or infected wounds/sores on the hands or arms that are not covered by a dry, durable, tight-fitting bandage	The employee or volunteer is <u>excluded</u> from the food facility or preparation area	When medically cleared by physician
Been diagnosed with one of the following illnesses: E.coli 0157:H7 (or shiga-toxin producing E.coli), Salmonella typhi, Salmonella spp., Shigella spp., Hepatitis A virus, Norovirus, Entamoeba histolytica, Or any other illness that may be transmittable through food.		

If an employee is restricted or excluded from handling food due to illness, they may use sick leave, or if the symptoms do not pose a threat of spreading illness to other persons in the workplace, the individual may be re-assigned to work that does not require handling of food. When an individual has been restricted or excluded from food handling duties due to illness, they should not return to food handling duties until they have been asymptomatic for at least 24 hours, or cleared by a physician, depending on the illness, as noted in the chart above.

For more information, see the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) fact sheet, “Illness Reporting Requirements for Foodservice Workers and Persons-in-Charge” for more information. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/pubsforms/Documents/fdbRFgde08.pdf>

A comprehensive *ANR Food Safety Guide, For Recipe Demonstrations and Food Tastings* is available to Advisors, Supervisors, and Educators that work in Nutrition Education programs.

This Safety Note is compiled based on guidance from the US Food & Drug Administration, California Department of Public Health, and the California Retail Food Code.