**Food Handling, Preparation and Storage**

Food Safety is important for everyone but it is especially important for the children living at the Ronald McDonald House. Children with weakened immune systems are more at risk to infections brought on by disease-causing bacteria that contaminate food. To avoid this, we must be especially cautious when handling, preparing and transporting food. Please keep in mind, as you are reading through the following information, that our main concern is the bacteria and germs that can occur in food that is prepared or transported incorrectly. Let each person in your group know how important it is to read the following guidelines prior to coming to the House.

Please stay at home if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms: sore throat, runny nose, coughing or sneezing, watery eyes, fever, chills, unexplained rashes, general aches, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea or if you have recently been exposed to or have chicken pox, shingles, measles, tuberculosis, influenza, or hepatitis. All volunteers must also have had chickenpox or been vaccinated for chickenpox or any other infectious disease.

1. All food must be prepared on-site with the exception of commercially prepared items and brought in or delivered directly to the House.

2. Take special care in transporting food to the House:
   - Potentially hazardous food (see #6) must be transported in coolers on ice.
   - Hot food that is commercially prepared off-site and transported to the House must arrive at the House within 60 minutes from time of purchase. If the temperature on arrival is less than 140 degrees, it must be reheated to 165 degrees.

3. Wash hands often and well: Clean hands are the most important food safety tool.

4. Never touch ready-to-eat food with bare hands:
   - Use serving utensils to handle food
   - Wear gloves (provided by the House), when doing food prep and serving at the House. **Important Rules for Using Gloves**
     - Wash hands before using gloves and after removing gloves
     - Change gloves that get ripped or become contaminated
     - Never wash or reuse gloves.
     - Change gloves between working with raw and ready-to-eat foods

5. Clean and sanitize all food preparation surfaces with hot, soapy water
   - Before using
   - In between preparation of different food items
   - During final clean up

6. Keep potentially hazardous foods hot or cold:
   - These are defined as foods in which bacteria are more likely to grow.
   - These foods include, but are limited to:
     - Animal products (includes eggs, dairy products)
Cooked starches (rice, beans, pasta, potatoes)
Fruits and vegetables as follows: cooked vegetables, tofu, cut melons.

- Keep potentially hazardous foods out of the Danger Zone (41-140 degrees F). Maintain the following temperatures of foods as they are being held and served:
  - Hot food holding temperature = 140 degrees F or higher
  - Cold food holding temperature = 41 degrees F or colder

7. **Cook food to proper temperature (thermometers provided)**
   - 165 degrees F: poultry, hot dogs, stuffed foods and stuffing, casseroles, canned foods, all reheated food
   - 160 degrees F: beef, pork, veal, lamb (steaks, roasts, chops); ground beef (includes hamburgers and any dish that contains ground beef); egg dishes
   - 145 degrees F: fish
   - 140 degrees F: hot-held vegetables
   - All meats must be fully cooked (well done).

   **Ham:** if precooked and in original package, heat to 140 degrees. If not in original package or ham is a leftover being reheated, it must be heated to 165 degrees

   If grilling hamburgers or other individual pieces of meat, every piece needs to be checked with a thermometer (provided). Remember, with thin pieces of meat; insert the probe into the side of the meat so that the entire sensing area is in the food.

   Once cooked to the proper temperature as listed above, keep hot food above 140°.

8. **Keep raw meat away from other food to prevent cross contamination.**
   - Wash and sanitize surfaces that come in contact with raw meat.
   - Use a separate cutting board for raw meat.
   - Wash hands after handling raw meat.

9. **Prohibited** foods are as follows:
   - Shellfish
   - Non-pasteurized juice and milk products
   - Raw seed sprouts, such as alfalfa sprouts
   - Undercooked meat, fish, or eggs
   - Alcohol: No alcohol may be brought to the House, including the use of it as an ingredient in on-site food preparation.

10. **Know the ingredients of your dishes:** Some of our families may have questions or concerns of possible food allergies or sensitivities. It’s a good idea to keep packaging handy so you may refer to the ingredients list. Dishes with peanuts must be clearly labeled.

**Visit these websites for more information on food safety:**

Leftover Food Storage: Families returning to the House after dinner will help themselves to the food packaged in the “leftover” refrigerators. Package as follows:

- Cool hot food as quickly as possible to 70 degrees or less before storing as leftovers. To cool, spread out in thin layer in pan and place pan on ice. Stir often to dissipate the heat.
- All leftover food should be stored in plastic bags or plastic containers. The House has some containers available, but donations are always appreciated.
- All leftovers must be portioned into individual servings whenever possible.
- Mark each bag or container using a permanent marker with the date, contents and store in the leftover refrigerators.

11. All dishes and cookware MUST be washed in the dishwashers. Please do not hand wash any items unless they are simply too big for the dishwashers.
- Clean all sinks and in hot, soapy water.
- Rinse dishes with hot, running water.
- Hand washed dishes must be air-dried on the countertops before being put away.