

Hygiene Guidelines on Production of Bakery Products

Objective:

Unhygienic storage and display of bread, cakes and biscuits, etc. after baking at high temperature or addition of fillings such as cream, fruits and chocolates by hands with no further heating before consumption, can pose a higher risk of microbiological contamination. This guideline is intended to remind the food industry about the food hygiene and safety issues they should pay attention to in the production, handling and baking of food.

Scope:

Premises for bakery product production, including premises (for takeaways and dine-in), bakery product production and teaching places, etc.

Definition:

Bakery products: refer to food that is prepared and baked with flour as the main ingredient and various fillings can be added to it after baking, including bread, cakes and biscuits, etc.

Content:

1. Smart Purchase and Receipt

- Purchase hygienic and good quality food ingredients such as flour and custard powder from reputable suppliers;
- Plan ahead the amount of food ingredients that are perishable and with shorter shelf life (e.g. fruits, milk) required before purchase;
- Check the information on the invoices to see if it is consistent with the received goods upon receipt. Retain purchase and sales records or relevant receipts for source tracing by competent government authorities whenever necessary;
- Make sure the food ingredients are in good condition with intact packaging and have not expired;
- Reject food items with the following abnormal conditions:

- Flour that has gone mouldy or has been contaminated with pests;
- Eggs with cracked or damaged shells;
- Canned food in a swollen, obviously dented or rusty can;
- Frozen ingredients with signs of melting.
- If necessary, request the suppliers to provide relevant documents, such as health certificate, certificate of origin and laboratory test report.

2. Proper Storage of Food Ingredients

- Food ingredients that need to be kept under room temperature should be stored in a cool, well-ventilated place to avoid exposure to direct sunlight;
- Fresh and perishable food ingredients such as cream and liquid egg should be stored in a refrigerator immediately (with chill temperature below 5 °C and freezing temperature at -18 °C or below);
- Food should be wrapped properly or stored in lidded containers, raw food (e.g. eggs) and cooked or ready-to-eat food should be stored in separate refrigerators as far as practicable or in the same refrigerator with cooked or ready-to-eat food placed on the shelf above the one where raw food is placed;
- Follow the “first-in, first-out” principle when using food ingredients so that those with earlier expiry date are used first;
- Containers that used to keep dried foodstuff (e.g. flour) should be cleaned and disinfected before putting in new batch of food ingredients.

3. Careful Preparation

- Utensils and equipment
 - Use separate utensils to handle raw food and cooked or ready-to-eat food;
 - All utensils and equipment that come in contact with food should be cleaned and disinfected before and after use;
 - Use durable utensils (e.g. made of stainless steel) to prepare dough and food ingredients and replace damaged, cracked utensils;
 - Canned food should be transferred to a suitable container after opening

for storage;

- Whisks, moulds, scales and piping tips should be cleaned regularly and single-use utensils such as pastry bags should be replaced;
- Use clean and qualified tools such as baking tray, pastry brush, baking moulds and baking paper when baking food;
- Check the temperature of the refrigerator regularly to ensure food is stored at proper temperature;
- Packaging materials should be kept in dust-proof containers or in sealed plastic bags.

- Preparation process

- Before preparation

- Plan ahead the amount of food ingredients required to avoid preparing excessive food ingredients or bakery products or preparing them too far in advance;
 - Food ingredients such as fruits and eggs should be cleaned thoroughly. Do not use food ingredients which have expired or deteriorated;
 - Use pasteurized eggs or egg products to prepare food that does not require further heat treatment, e.g. the sauce for preparing fruit tarts and puffs, etc.

- Preparation of ingredients

- Whip the required amount of fresh cream and store whipped cream in a refrigerator. When using cream for decoration, one should reduce the decorating time;
 - Store perishable or homemade food (e.g. cream, milk after opening, sliced or cut fruits, or homemade puree, etc.) under refrigeration and use them as soon as possible; The time and amount should be controlled when using melted chocolates to decorate cakes or bread. Do not repeat the steps of melting and chilling;
 - If prepackaged food ingredients cannot be used up in one go, they should be kept in sealed containers (e.g. food bags or plastic boxes) and stored properly. Food such as milk and cream should be used and stored according to the instructions on the package after opening;

- Defrosted food ingredients should be used as soon as possible and they should not be refrozen.

Production of bakery products

- Food ingredients and cooked or ready-to-eat food should be stored separately;
- When preparing dough, one should pay attention to the dough size, temperature, humidity and preparation time;
- When applying food additives such as flavourings and food colours, they should be used in the least amount to achieve the intended effect;
- Keep the fermentation environment clean and hygienic, and control the fermentation time of bread;
- Adjust the required baking time and temperature properly according to the types and quantity of bakery products to ensure they are baked thoroughly.

4. Proper Display

- Only pack the bakery products after proper cooling (and use qualified food packaging materials);
- Perishable bakery products (e.g. cream cakes) should be stored at below 5 °C. Do not sell bakery products which have expired or deteriorated;
- Finished bakery products should be rotated to ensure that the distribution and sale of products is carried out on a “first-in, first-out” basis;
- Use proper dust-proof and insect-proof equipment such as showcases to protect bakery products that are in display or ready for sale;
- For self-serve bakery shops, cleaned and disinfected tongs and trays should be provided to customers.

5. Personal Hygiene

- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food;
- Wear clean and light-coloured outer clothing or protective overalls;
- Do not wear rings, bracelets and watches, etc. Do not wear nail polish or false nails;

- Wear gloves or use utensils such as scoops and tongs when handling ready-to-eat food;
- Use waterproof dressings to cover open wounds properly;
- Do not handle money while handling food;
- Do not use finger to taste food;
- Suspend from engaging in any food handling work when suffering from symptoms of illness such as running nose, coughing, diarrhoea, vomiting and fever.

6. Environmental Hygiene

- All work surfaces should be made of impermeable and easy to clean materials, and kept well above the ground;
- Use covered rubbish bins, and empty and disinfect them regularly;
- Containers that are used for transporting bakery products such as bread boxes and plastic trays should be cleaned and disinfected before use;
- Set up effective pest control equipment;
- Do not keep pets at food premises.