

Hygiene Guidelines on Production of Sweet Food

Objective:

Most desserts are processed by hand and made with a variety of ingredients. Some desserts are at high risk of microbial contamination since they can be consumed without heating or directly after heating, cooling and cold storage. These guidelines aim to remind the trade of the hygiene and safety issues that are worth close attention during the preparation and display of desserts.

Scope:

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

Definition:

Sweet food: refers to ready-to-eat hot or cold food with sweetness, such as puddings, cakes and all kinds of sweet soup, etc.

Content:

1. Smart Purchase and Receipt

- Purchase hygienic and good quality food ingredients from reputable suppliers;
- Check the information on the invoices to see if it is consistent with the received goods upon receipt;
- Check whether the food ingredients are stored at proper temperatures. Make sure they are in good condition, uncontaminated or undamaged;
- Reject food ingredients which are from unknown sources, perished or expired;
- If necessary, request the suppliers to provide relevant documents, such as health certificates, certificates of origins and laboratory test reports of food products, etc.;
- Retain invoices and sales records for source tracing by competent government authorities whenever necessary.

2. Careful Preparation

- Process ready-to-eat food and non-ready-to-eat food with separate utensils;

- Do not use food ingredients which have expired, mildewed or deteriorated;
- Wash all ingredients thoroughly; wash fruit ingredients thoroughly with drinking water before use¹ and peeling (if applicable);
- Food ingredients should be cooked thoroughly;
- Avoid preparing excessive food ingredients or sweet food or preparing them too far in advance;
- Use pasteurized eggs, pasteurized egg products or dried egg powder to prepare sweet food that do not require heating before consumption;
- Use drinking water or edible ice cubes to prepare or cool down ready-to-eat desserts;
- Canned food should be transferred to a suitable container after opening for storage in a refrigerator;
- Freshly prepared sweet food should not mix with those that have been prepared earlier.

3. Proper Storage and Display

1) 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 should be properly covered and kept in a refrigerator (with chill temperature below 5°C and freezing temperature at -18°C or below);
- Ready-to-eat food and non ready-to-eat food should be stored separately in lidded containers, preferably in two refrigerators, or in the same refrigerator with ready-to-eat food placed on the shelf above the one where non ready-to-eat food is placed;
- Pay attention to the expiry date and storage temperature of fresh cream;
- Follow the “first-in, first-out” principle when using food ingredients so that those with earlier expiry date are used first.

2) Cold Served Sweet food

- Cold served sweet food should be properly covered and stored in a refrigerator at below 5°C and should not be in contact with other non ready-to-eat food or semi-finished food products;

¹ Please refer to GL 005 DSA 2018 “Hygiene Guidelines on Handling Pre-cut Fruit”.

- Cooked sweet food that is going to be served cold should be cooled as quickly as possible, and stored in a refrigerator properly;
- Follow the “first-in, first-out” principle to sell or use cold served sweet food as soon as possible.

3) Hot Served Sweet Food

- Hot served sweet food after cooking should be kept at above 60°C and should not be displayed at room temperature for more than two hours;
- Reheat cooled sweet food thoroughly, with core temperature reaching at least 75°C, and do not reheat them more than once.

4. Time Control

- During the whole process of production and operation, it is necessary to shorten the duration that ready-to-eat fresh cream, custard sauce and sliced fruits are left in the temperature danger zone (between 5°C and 60°C) as far as possible as they are potentially hazardous. When inevitable, follow the 2 hour/4 hour rule²:
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for less than 2 hours should be stored in the refrigerator or used immediately;
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for 2 to 4 hours should be used immediately;
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for more than 4 hours should be discarded.

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;
- Use waterproof dressings to cover open wounds;
- 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, etc.

² Please refer to GL 001 DSA 2019 “Hygiene Guidelines on Time and Temperature Control”.

6. Utensils, Equipment and Environmental Hygiene

- All work surfaces should be impervious and stay away from the ground. The materials used should be easy to clean;
- All surfaces of utensils and equipment that come in contact with food should be cleaned and disinfected before use;
- Replace damaged, cracked utensils;
- Check the temperature of the refrigerator regularly to ensure food is stored at proper temperature;
- Use covered rubbish bins, and empty and disinfect them regularly;
- Do not keep pets at food premises.

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