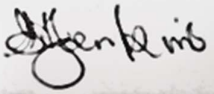


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	Chairperson, Suzanne Jenkins



## FOOD PREPARATION & HANDLING POLICY

### Internal ECS References

<b>In S:\0 CURRENT POLICY &amp; PROCEDURES:</b>	
ECS WHS Policy	
ECS Structure	

### External References

Child Safe Standards at <a href="https://ocq.nsw.gov.au/resources">https://ocq.nsw.gov.au/resources</a>	Aged Care Quality Standards at <a href="https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/standards">https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/standards</a>
Food Safety Act 1991	National CHSP Meal Guidelines
Food Standards Code	<a href="https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/common-wealth-home-support-programme-guidelines">https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/common-wealth-home-support-programme-guidelines</a>

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**1. POLICY STATEMENT**

ECS is committed to best practice food preparation and food handling principles in the interests of health and safety.

**1.1 Definitions**

client = term used across ECS programs and policy documents instead of “consumer”, which is specific to Aged Care  
ECS workers = anyone who carries out work on behalf of ECS, including staff, volunteers [including management committee members], contractors and students on placement

**1.2 Acronyms**

CHSP = Commonwealth Home Support Programme  
 ECS = Engadine Community Services

**2. GENERAL POLICY**

ECS workers always adhere to best practice food preparation and handling principles to protect themselves and others from food poisoning or other food-borne safety concerns. Staff induction and training will incorporate these principles and explain how they apply to ECS activities. Third parties providing food to ECS-organised client services will be made aware of this Policy.

ECS does not provide food in its Child & Family Services, and only in Aged Services under limited circumstances. As a CHSP provider, ECS acknowledges that people frail from age are vulnerable to illness, malnutrition and other health and well-being issues and that this fact should inform our approach to food preparation and handling.

The ECS Manager is responsible for monitoring the amount of food preparation and handling related incidents as part of the ECS continuous improvement framework.

**3. KEY FOOD HANDLING PRINCIPLES**

A range of best practice food handling principles have informed the ECS food preparation and handling procedures detailed at section 4 of this Policy. They are outlined below.

**3.1 *The Food Safety Act & Food Standards Code***

Food safety in Australia is legislated by the *Food Safety Act 1991* and the subsequent Food Standards Code. As a not-for-profit charity, ECS is generally not subject to enforcement of the Code in its day-to-day activities. While ECS workers are not bound by the Code, it is best practice for workers to be made aware of the principles and apply them wherever possible and practicable. Induction and on-going training should encompass the Food Standards Code summary below:

1. Do not handle food if you have a food-borne illness such as vomiting, diarrhoea, a fever or a sore throat with a fever
2. Do not handle food with skin injuries or sores exposed
3. Do your best to prevent anything you are wearing from coming into contact with food or food contact services
4. Wear clean outer clothing when preparing and/or handling food
5. Do not sneeze, blow or cough over unprotected food or surfaces likely to come into contact with food
6. Do not spit, smoke or use tobacco or similar preparation where food is handled
7. Wash hands thoroughly using warm, running water and soap as recommended by health experts before working with ready-to-eat food and after:
  - handling raw food
  - going to the toilet
  - handling food or returning to handling food after other work
  - after smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a tissue or handkerchief
  - eating, drinking or using tobacco or similar substances
  - after touching hair, face etc
  - as necessary eg. when dirty hands can transfer germs or infections
8. Dry hands thoroughly on a single use towel

<b>3.2</b>	<b>The Food Authority of NSW</b>
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The Food Authority of NSW gives [four key principles of food safety](#):

1. Keep it cold
  - keep the fridge below 5°C
  - put any food that needs to be kept cold in the fridge straight away
  - don't eat food that's meant to be in the fridge if it's been left out for 2 hours or more
  - defrost and marinate foods in the fridge, especially meats and chicken
  - shop with a cooler bag, picnic with an Esky
  
2. Keep it clean
  - wash and dry hands thoroughly before starting to prepare or eat any food, even a snack
  - keep benches, kitchen equipment and tableware clean and dry
  - don't let raw meat juices drip onto other foods
  - separate raw and cooked food and use different cutting boards and knives for both
  - do not make food for others if sick with something like diarrhoea
  
3. Keep it hot
  - cook foods to at least 60°C, hotter for specific foods
  - reheat foods to at least 60°C, until they're steaming hot
  - look to make sure there's no pink left in cooked meats, such as mince or sausages
  - look for clear juices before serving chicken
  - heat to boiling all marinades containing raw meat juices before serving
  
4. Check the label
  - don't eat food past a 'use-by' date
  - note a 'best before' date
  - follow storage and cooking instructions
  - be allergy aware
  - ask for information about unpackaged foods

Recruitment and induction and on-going training for ECS workers who handle food will involve discussing these principles.

<b>3.3</b>	<b>Nutrition Australia</b>
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Nutrition Australia published an easy to read guide for food handlers:

1. Always wash your hands thoroughly for recommended period before you start preparing food
2. Do not handle food with bare hands – use gloves instead
3. Do not handle food if you are sick or have cuts or sores on your hands
4. Keep hot foods hot (>60°C) and keep cold foods cold (<5°C)
5. Defrost food in the fridge or microwave
6. Do not refreeze thawed food
7. Store food appropriately
8. Do not overload the fridge
9. Clean and sanitize your cooking or storage area after preparing or storing raw food
10. Never smoke in food areas
11. Clean the entire cooking area regularly and thoroughly
12. Eradicate pests, as they carry germs

A copy of this guideline will be laminated and placed in the ECS kitchen and anywhere else that food may be handled on ECS premises. All ECS workers who handle food will also be trained in these principles.

**4. NUTRITION & FOOD HANDLING IN AGED CARE GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

ECS acknowledges that older people are at risk of malnutrition due to their reduced ability to shop and/or cook, and may have a reduced appetite or changing nutrition needs due to illness or medical conditions. Social isolation can also affect the desire and motivation to consume food. ECS recognises this principle in its CHSP social support offerings, including shopping support and centre-based and community group programs.

In delivering supports, ECS workers should be aware of nutrition and safe food handling, and know when they must report concerns to the ECS Manager [see procedures in 4.4 and 5 below]. The procedures adopt the principles of The [CHSP National Meals Guideline](#), developed by Meals on Wheels Australia. The Guideline has three purposes:

1. To provide nationally consistent advice to CHSP meal providers
2. To support CHSP meal providers’ existing efforts in enhancing the nutritional quality of meals
3. To respond to the nutrient requirements and changing needs of older customers receiving meals who are living in the community.

<b>4.1</b>	<b>Nutrition Principles</b>
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The Guideline recommends that those frail from age eat at least three meals each day with nourishing snacks between meals. Nourishing snacks which may be served by ECS at social support groups include options such as cheese and biscuits, fruit, yoghurt and fruit cake.

Three main meals are not the responsibility of ECS; Aged Services activities may occasionally occur during a mealtime and provide access to a meal, such as lunch. However, ECS workers only provide physical support to clients to purchase and/or prepare food chosen by the individual client (e.g. when shopping or from a café menu). In these situations, the worker may inform the client that it is important to include protein rich foods (e.g. beef, fish, egg, cheese, milk, nuts or legumes) to help maintain muscle mass and strength and calcium rich foods (e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt and other dairy alternatives) that are also rich in protein and energy.

For instance, ECS workers who accompany shopping clients may use this sample shopping list as a discussion piece for supporting good nutrition outcomes in those that are frail from age:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk (reduced fat)</li> <li>• Long life milk UHT (reduced fat)</li> <li>• Milk powder (reduced fat)</li> <li>• Flavoured milk</li> <li>• Yoghurt (full cream)</li> <li>• Cheese (full cream)</li> <li>• Custard (full cream)</li> <li>• Cream</li> <li>• Margarine or butter</li> <li>• Jam/honey/peanut butter</li> <li>• Eggs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiche</li> <li>• Ham or other cold meat</li> <li>• Canned salmon, tuna and sardines</li> <li>• Canned baked beans</li> <li>• Canned soups (and add milk and/or cream when making up)</li> <li>• Canned fruits (no added sugar)</li> <li>• Canned Vegetables (salt reduced)</li> <li>• Fresh fruit</li> <li>• Frozen vegetables</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potatoes</li> <li>• Rice</li> <li>• Rolled Oats</li> <li>• Wholegrain breakfast cereals</li> <li>• Bread (Wholemeal and seeded)</li> <li>• Crispbread or crackers</li> <li>• Chocolate (dark chocolate)</li> <li>• Vegetable oil (canola, olive oil)</li> <li>• Sauces (reduced fat and red</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|

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Drinking adequate amounts of fluids is essential, ECS workers should remind clients to drink and ensure a range of options are available where possible (i.e water, milk, juice, tea, coffee) Reminding an older adult to drink is essential, as their thirst sensation can be impaired with age and by the time a person realises they are thirsty, they may already be at risk of dehydration

### 4.2 Food Safety & Handling Principles

Some important food safety and handling principles include:

1. Staff must never work with food for others if they have a gastrointestinal illness, a contagious illness, weeping wounds or influenza
2. The temperature and condition of goods received should be checked and stored appropriately as soon as they are received
3. Hot food should be cooked thoroughly and always served above 60°C
4. All cold foods should be held and served below 5°C
5. Frozen food should be hard frozen (usually -18°C)

These principles have informed the procedures at section 5 of this Policy.

## 5. ECS FOOD PREPARATION & HANDLING PROCEDURES

### 5.1 General Food Preparation & Handling Procedure

- If food is delivered to ECS, packaging will be checked by ECS workers to ensure seals are unbroken etc; any product opened should be returned to the provider or disposed of
- No workers to prepare or handle food if they are ill or have open sores and cuts
- Staff must not smoke where food is prepared or handled
- All staff must wash hands properly prior to preparing or handling food, and after coughing, sneezing etc and before and after handling raw food
- All staff must wear gloves when preparing or handling food, and change them at least hourly or sooner if they become torn or if there is a change in task eg. when changing from raw to ready-to-eat food
- ECS Building Communities Coordinator is responsible for purchase and stocking of gloves in the ECS kitchen
- ECS workers must ensure food is covered and stored appropriately, including in the fridge and freezer
- The fridge and freezer will be checked weekly by ECS Building Communities Coordinator, and out-of-date stock discarded
- Food preparation surfaces must be kept clean at all times; cleaning materials are located in the kitchen and are replenished by ECS Building Communities Coordinator.
- Surfaces should be cleaned thoroughly after each instance of food preparation; all staff are responsible for ensuring this occurs [note: contract cleaners visit twice weekly to perform a heavy-duty clean]
- ECS workers must use separate utensils, chopping boards and other equipment for raw and read-to-eat foods to avoid cross-contamination; if this is not possible, thoroughly wash and sanitise equipment between uses
- ECS workers will thoroughly wash all fruit and vegetables before use
- Kitchen bins will be emptied regularly by the cleaners
- If any incidence of food poisoning occurs, an incident report should be completed and lodged with the ECS Manager
- ECS workers to report any broken or malfunctioning equipment to the ECS Manager or ECS Building Communities Coordinator ECS, as soon as possible

### 5.2 Specifics for Aged Services

- ECS workers should always adhere to the general procedure outlined at 5.1
- If concerned about client nutrition, or the ability of the client to prepare their own food, record in file notes for the Aged Services Coordinator to follow-up
- If staff are escorting a client shopping, staff to encourage a range of food options that encourage a nutritious diet, where possible and appropriate, and report any concerns in the file notes
- Staff should not raise concerns directly with the client unless authorised to do so by the Aged Services Coordinator
- When organising activities that involve meals, the Aged Services Coordinator must endeavour to choose sources/venues that meet nutritional needs of clients
- Splitting meals and saving items for later should not be encouraged, and if a client is splitting food, this should be noted in the client's file and reported to the Aged Services Coordinator for appropriate follow-up