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Food Handling Guidelines for Bake Sales

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This information serves as a guide for charitable, non-profit organizations in the sale of food to the public through occasional bake sales. All inquires related to your organization’s bake sale should be directed to your local health department.

Bake sales have always been popular social events in our communities. They can provide excellent fundraising opportunities for many of our local community groups and organizations. However, as in any situation where food is being prepared and offered for sale to the public, caution must be exercised to provide safe food. Although the traditional bake sale foods such as bread, buns, pies, cookies, and candies rarely cause illness, it is important to remember that under the right circumstances any food can cause foodborne illness.

Consider the following recommendations for bake sales:

Transport safely
• Food should be tightly wrapped or sealed during transport to protect from dust, dirt, and insects.
• Vehicles used to transport food should be clean and maintained in good sanitary condition.
• Food should not be transported with pets.

Package correctly
• All food offered must be proportioned and pre-packaged on single service (paper or styrofoam plates or trays).
• Wrap all items completely in clear plastic wrap, aluminum foil or other clean, single service coverings.
• Use containers approved for food storage. Do NOT use trash bags.

Wash your hands
All food handlers must wash their hands with soap and water prior to handling food, frequently during the sale, and after visiting the restroom.
• Use soap and warm, running water.
• Wash all surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, palms, back of hands, fingers, and under the fingernails.
• Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds.
• Rinse thoroughly and dry with a paper towel.

Clean and sanitize preparation and serving table
• Clean all food contact surfaces with warm water and soap. Use clean cloth or paper towels. Do not use sponges.
• After cleaning, sanitize work surfaces with 1/2 teaspoon chlorine bleach to one quart water.
• For easy use, sanitizing mixture can be put into a new spray bottle labeled “CHLORINE SANITIZER”.
Items acceptable for sale
• Breads—yeast, quick breads
• Cakes (except cheesecake or cream-filled)
• Cookies
• Bars
• Muffins
• Candies
• Dried fruits, herbs, and spices
• Cupcakes (except cream-filled)
• Fruit pies NOT requiring refrigeration
• Jams and jellies (must be processed in canning jars with sealed lids)
• Popcorn

Items NOT acceptable for sale
(may support bacterial growth)
• Cheesecake
• Pumpkin, cream, or custard pie
• Cream-filled cupcakes or doughnuts
• Frosting and fillings with cream cheese
• Homemade ice cream

Warning: Never offer home-canned foods other than jams and jellies at bake sales. Eating improperly canned vegetables, fruits, meat, fish, or poultry may cause botulism, a fatal poisoning.

The sponsor should maintain a list of contributors to the bake sale, including their names, addresses, and telephone numbers and the type of food donated. Consider labeling food with name, address, and phone number of contributor.

For more information on food handling safety, contact your local county Extension office.

Sources:
Karen P. Penner, Food Handling Guidelines for Bake Sales, Kansas State University, April 2000.
Reviewed by Dave Miklos and Doug Kozel, South Dakota Department of Health.

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