Safe Food Handling and Snack Time Hygiene Stats and Facts

FACTS

- **Hand Hygiene Failures:** Handling food without proper handwashing after contact with surfaces, waste, or bodily fluids can transfer harmful pathogens directly to ready-to-eat items.
- **Cross-Contamination:** Using the same utensils, gloves, or surfaces for raw and ready-to-eat foods can spread bacteria and allergens without visible signs.
- **Improper Glove Use:** Reusing gloves or failing to change them between tasks creates the same contamination risk as bare hands.
- **Time and Temperature Abuse:** Leaving food at unsafe temperatures during preparation or snack service allows rapid bacterial growth.
- **Unclean Surfaces and Equipment:** Food contact surfaces that are not properly cleaned and sanitized can harbor pathogens that contaminate multiple batches of food.
- **Chemical Contamination:** Cleaning agents used near food without proper control can contaminate food or food-contact surfaces, leading to exposure risks.
- **Ill Food Handlers:** Workers handling food while sick can transmit viruses such as norovirus through direct contact or contaminated surfaces.

STATS

- In the United States, food service and preparation workers recorded over 93,000 nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses in 2023, many involving exposure to harmful substances and unsafe hygiene practices (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that exposure

to harmful substances or environments accounted for thousands of workplace illness cases in food service settings between 2021 and 2023.

- In Canada, the food and beverage service sector reported over 6,000 lost-time injury claims annually in recent years, including incidents linked to contamination, burns, and chemical exposure (Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada).
- U.S. data shows that contact with objects and equipment and exposure incidents are among the leading causes of injury in food preparation occupations, reflecting unsafe handling and sanitation practices (BLS, 2022–2023).
- In Canada, workers in accommodation and food services consistently experience injury rates above the national average for service industries, with frequent exposure to hazardous substances and environments (AWCBC, 2021–2023).
- The U.S. Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries indicates that food preparation and serving occupations report multiple fatalities each year, including cases involving exposure, burns, and unsafe work conditions (BLS CFOI, 2021–2023).