

No Time To Teach

Tasting Food Safely

Lesson Participants: School Nutrition Employees

Type of Lesson: Face-to-face teaching session

Objective: For school nutrition employees to be able to identify why proper taste testing is important to food safety and demonstrate how to properly taste food during preparation.

Materials Needed:

- Presenter's Script
- Pens or Pencils (one for each employee)
- Handout: Five Steps for Food-Safe Taste Testing (one for each employee)
- Sample Pan of Food
- Container of spoons, handles up (at least two spoons for each participant)
- Small plates or bowls (one per participant)
- Copies of continuing education certificate for each participant (see page 6 of this lesson)



Presenter's Script:

Tasting Food Safely

Introduction: (3 minutes)

SAY: This lesson explains the importance of using food-safe taste testing to assure quality standards are met for customers. We will use a practice-based activity to demonstrate the two-spoon method for food-safe taste testing.

It may sound obvious, but taste testing food during preparation is necessary to ensure that foods taste good. How else can we be sure that the food we serve our customers is delicious? Even when we use standardized recipes, we should always taste test for quality assurance. When we do our taste testing, it is important that we do so in a manner that keeps the food safe from contamination.

The **two-spoon method allows tasting to be done in a sanitary manner.**

Generally spoons are used; however, smaller disposable spoons may also be used. There are two reasons why we use the two-spoon method.

We refer to one of the spoons as a **sampling spoon**. This is the spoon that is used to secure a sample of food from the pot or pan of product being tasted.

The second spoon is the **tasting spoon**. This is the spoon that comes in contact with the mouth of the taster.

In order to keep the sampling spoon uncontaminated, **the sampling spoon and the tasting spoon must never come into physical contact with one another.** The same is true when a small plate or bowl is used in the process. The sampling spoon must never touch anything but the food.

There are two reasons why we use the two-method:

First, it often takes more than one sample to determine if the food is acceptable. By using two spoons, repeated samples may be tasted without the danger of contaminating the food.

The second reason is that having two spoons reminds the taster that the contaminated tasting spoon must never be used to sample from the pan. In other words, this method helps us to assure that we are tasting foods in the safest manner.

Let's practice the two-spoon method of food-safe taste testing.

Five Steps to Safe Food Tasting (12 minutes)

DO: Distribute **Handout: Five Steps for Food-Safe Taste Testing**, two spoons, and a small plate or bowl to each participant. Position the pan of food to be tasted in a place convenient for all participants.

Ask for participant volunteers to read each step of safe food tasting from the handout. Demonstrate each step as it is read.

SAY: Now, let's try these steps together. I will read the steps aloud, and each of you will practice each step of food-safe taste testing.

1. Why do we taste food? (note to presenter: Listen to responses to make sure the participants realize the key concept of *"Taste testing food during preparation is necessary to ensure that foods taste good".*)
2. Who can summarize why it is necessary to use proper procedures when taste testing foods? (note to presenter: Listen to responses to make sure the participants realize the key concept of *"It is important that we taste test in a manner that keeps the food safe from contamination."*)

DO: Continue to coach employees if needed to draw out effective answers to the two questions above.

SAY: Taste testing food during preparation is necessary to ensure that foods taste good. We *should taste test for quality assurance even when standardized recipes are used. It is important to taste food in a manner that keeps the food safe from contamination. Remember that tasting is not the same as eating a meal!*

Continuing Education Documentation:

DO: Complete the Continuing Education report at the end of this lesson, obtain participant signatures, and file in *HACCP Part 4: Continuing Education and Professional Development*.

Provide each participant with a copy of the certificate of completion attached to this lesson. Remind participants to update their professional development log as required by the School Nutrition Administrator so that compliance with the USDA Professional Standards Rule is adequately documented.

Handout: Five Steps for Food-Safe Taste Testing

1. Take a sample of the food from the pan using the sampling spoon.

Use two spoons, a sampling and a tasting spoon. Using the sampling spoon, take a small amount of food from the container. To prevent contamination, never taste directly from a sampling spoon or any utensil used in preparation or service.

2. Turn or step away from the container of food.

Turn away from the pan or take a step back prior to transferring the food from the sampling spoon to the tasting spoon. This is an important step. Standing away from the pan of food being sampled prevents contamination during the transfer or tasting. When standing over or near the pan of food, contamination will occur if the spoon drips into the product.

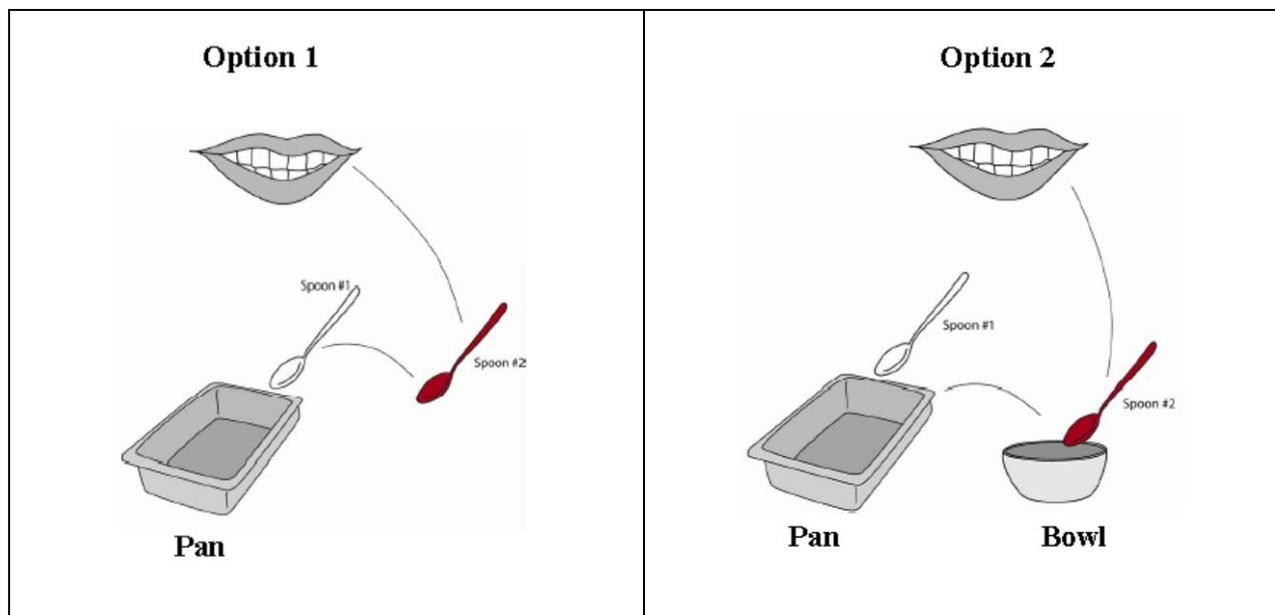
3. Transfer the food from the sampling spoon to the tasting spoon or to a small plate or bowl.

This step can be tricky because the food is poured or dropped from the sampling spoon to the tasting spoon. The two spoons may never touch one another. This step is most easily done with the smallest adequate sample. Remember, do not ever allow the sampling spoon to touch the tasting spoon, small plate, or bowl; and do not allow the food to fall back into the pot or pan.

4. Taste the food.

5. Transport the used spoons, plates, or bowls to the dishwashing area immediately after tasting. If disposables are used, discard immediately.

Remember taste testing is not the same as eating a meal!



Reference: National Food Service Management Institute

No Time To Train – Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants Five Steps for Food-Safe Taste Testing

FOOD SAFETY AND HACCP CONTINUING EDUCATION REPORT

(Complete this report and File in HACCP Part 4: Continuing Education and Professional Development)

LESSON TITLE: **No Time To Teach: Tasting Food Safely**

DATE: _____

LOCATION: _____

INSTRUCTOR: _____

Lesson Agenda/Outline is attached: **Yes** **No**

PARTICIPANT NAME	SCHOOL

Certificate of Participation

This is to certify that

completed the

School Nutrition Services

No Time to Teach Lesson:

Tasting Food Safely

providing $\frac{1}{4}$ hour of continuing education
credit for the School Nutrition Area of

**Food Safety and HACCP: 2620 Food Safety-
General**

Signature of Presenter

Date