



No Time To Train

Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants

Five Steps for Food-Safe Taste Testing

Lesson Overview

Lesson Participants: School Nutrition Assistants/Technicians

Type of Lesson: Short face-to-face training session

Time Needed to Conduct the Lesson: 15 minutes

Lesson Description: This lesson explains the importance of using food-safe taste testing to assure quality standards are met for customers. A practice-based activity is used to demonstrate the two-spoon method for food-safe taste testing. The lesson is designed for managers to teach school nutrition assistants/technicians.

Lesson Objectives

At the end of this lesson, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify why proper taste testing is important to food safety.
2. Demonstrate how to properly taste food during preparation.

Get Ready to Train

The format for the **No Time to Train** lessons includes an overview, preparation checklist, lesson at a glance with timeline for conducting the lesson, reference, and script. The manager/instructor will use the script to present the lesson to the participants. The script gives directions to the manager/instructor—**DO, SAY, ASK, LISTEN, AND ACTIVITY**—to deliver the lesson.

No special audio-visual or electronic equipment is needed to conduct the lesson. The lesson can be presented in the cafeteria, media center, or classroom.

Preparation Checklist

Directions: Use the Preparation Checklist to get ready for the training session. Keep track of your progress by checking off tasks as they are completed.

Done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lesson Tasks
	<p>Gather Materials</p> <p>Materials Needed:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Instructor’s Script
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Handout: Five Steps for Food-Safe Taste Testing (one for each participant)
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Container of spoons or disposable spoons, handles up (two spoons for each participant)
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Small plates or bowls (one per participant)
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Pan of food for tasting
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Pens or pencils (one for each participant)
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Session Evaluation form (one for each participant)
	<p>Prepare for Lesson</p> <p>Before the Training:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Make copies of Handout: Five Steps for Food-Safe Taste Testing (one for each participant)
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Make copies of Session Evaluation form (one for each participant)
	<p>On Training Day:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Place pens or pencils on tables (one for each participant).
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Prepare pan of food for tasting. Use safe holding practices until training time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Distribute handout to each participant.
	<p>On the Instructor’s Table:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Instructor’s Script
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Handout: Five Steps for Food-Safe Taste Testing
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Container of spoons
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Small plates or bowls
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Pan of food for tasting
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Session Evaluation form

Lesson at a Glance
(15 minutes)

Time	Topic	Task	Materials
5 minutes	Introduction and Objective 1 Identify why proper taste testing is important to food safety.	Instructor introduces the two-spoon method for food-safe taste testing. Volunteer participants read each step as the instructor demonstrates.	Instructor's Script Handout: Five Steps for Food-Safe Taste Testing
6 minutes	Objective 2 Demonstrate how to properly taste food during preparation.	Participants practice taste testing properly using the two-spoon method. Volunteer demonstrates taste testing properly using a small plate or bowl while the instructor reads the steps. Participants practice taste testing properly using a small plate or bowl.	Handout: Five Steps for Food-Safe Taste Testing Two spoons per participant Pan of food to taste One small plate or bowl per participant
2 minutes	Wrap-up and Review	Instructor asks for a volunteer to summarize why proper taste testing during preparation is important to food safety.	None
2 minutes	Session Evaluation	Conduct a short evaluation of the lesson.	Session Evaluation form

Note to Instructor:

Conduct this lesson away from the food preparation area.

Emphasize that taste testing is not eating.

Check with your state or local health department to see what additional resources may be available. It is likely that the governing agency will have written guidelines with wording such as, "A food employee shall not use a utensil more than once to taste food that is to be sold or served."

Reference

National Food Service Management Institute. (2005). *Adult day care resource manual for the USDA child and adult care food program* (p.73). University, MS: Author.

Instructor's Script



SAY:

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.

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.

And the other 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.



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:

Can I have a volunteer to read the first step from the handout?

**LISTEN:**

Listen as the first step is read aloud.

It says:

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

**DO:**

Once the step is read, demonstrate the step.

Use two spoons, a sampling and a tasting spoon. Using the sampling spoon to 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.

**ASK:**

Can I have a volunteer to read the second step from the handout?

**LISTEN:**

Listen as the second step is read aloud.

It says:

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

**DO:**

Once the step is read, demonstrate the step.

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.

**ASK:**

Can I have a volunteer to read third step from the handout?

**LISTEN:**

Listen as the third step read aloud.

It says:

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

**DO:**

Once the step is read, demonstrate the step.

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.

**ASK:**

Can I have a volunteer to read the fourth and fifth steps from the handout?

**LISTEN:**

Listen as the fourth and fifth steps are read aloud.

They say:

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.**

**DO:**

Once the steps are read aloud, demonstrate the steps.

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

**SAY:**

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

**DO:**

Ask participants to take two spoons, one for sampling and one for tasting and a plate or bowl. Practice taste testing using the proper procedures. Read each of the steps aloud as participants practice each step.

**ACTIVITY:**

Participants practice proper taste testing as instructor reads each step.

**ASK:**

So, again, why do we taste food?

**LISTEN:**

Listen to individual responses. **Key concept: taste testing food during preparation is necessary to ensure that foods taste good.**

**ASK:**

Who can summarize why it is necessary to use proper procedures when taste testing foods?

**LISTEN:**

Listen to individual responses. **Key concept: It is important that we taste test in a manner that keeps the food safe from contamination.**



ASK:

Do you have any other comments or questions about food-safe taste testing?



LISTEN:

Listen to individual responses. Answer questions to the best of your ability. If there are questions you can't answer, tell participants you will find out the answer and let them know later. If you need assistance in finding answers, please call the National Food Service Management Institute at 800-321-3054.



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 eating!



DO:

Distribute the Session Evaluation form.



SAY:

Thank you for participating in the lesson today. Please take a couple of minutes to complete the Session Evaluation form. Thank you for your input.

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 food 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 eating!



National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi

Session Evaluation

Instructions:

Completely fill in the circle of your answer. Use a #2 pencil.

Please select only one response for each statement. Do not fold or crease this sheet.

Title of Meeting: _____	
Session Topic: _____	Trainer's Code: _____
Date: _____	Time Slot: _____ Location: _____ Length of Event (hrs/min): _____

Attendee Status:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> District director | <input type="radio"/> Major city director | <input type="radio"/> Private consultant/trainer |
| <input type="radio"/> State agency staff | <input type="radio"/> Site-level manager | <input type="radio"/> Foodservice assistant |
| <input type="radio"/> Educator | <input type="radio"/> Other (please list) _____ | |

Reaction to this Session		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Please read the following statements related to the session. Rate your level of agreement by using the scale 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree).						
1.	The session objectives were clearly presented.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	The session objectives were achieved.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	I can apply what I learned in this session to my job.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Attending the session increased my skill on the topic.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Attending the session increased my knowledge on the topic.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	I would recommend this session to others.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Overall, the session met or exceeded my expectations.	5	4	3	2	1

Comments about this Session
<p>The information I found MOST useful was:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Please share any additional comments:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

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