



F I R S T UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF SYRACUSE

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Policy #: 014

Policy Name: Food Safety and Handling

Purpose: To describe the procedures to be used for appropriate and safe food handling at First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse (First UU), including the preparation and handling of gluten free and other known allergy foods.

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A. General

1. There are eight top food allergens as defined by Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA): Milk, Wheat (gluten), Eggs, Soy, Shellfish, Peanuts, Tree Nuts, and Fish.
2. Proper food preparation, handling and cleaning is essential to keeping everyone safe. First UU will follow this procedure when preparing and plating food being served for pot lucks, coffee hour and other special events.
3. This procedure will be used during the gluten-free/allergy sensitivity training for all First UU members and friends who participate in food handling/preparation.
4. NYS Law prohibits bare hand contact with ready to eat and prepared foods. Gloves must be worn when handling these items.
5. Before preparing and/or plating food, hands must be washed.
6. To avoid cross contamination, hands must be washed immediately prior to handling gluten-free foods.
7. Due to the harboring of bacteria and potential cross-contamination issues, dish sponges will not be utilized. Only “Handi-wipe” type cloths will be used and will be discarded after each use.
8. All plastic tablecloths must be cleaned with disinfectant spray and paper towels prior to being put away. If cloth tablecloths are used, they must be machine washed and dried prior to being used again.
9. All areas of the kitchen must be cleaned with disinfectant spray and paper towels after use.
10. Paper towels or Handi-wipes used in “Non-Gluten-Free” areas of the kitchen or for “Non-Gluten-Free” items (i.e., plastic tablecloths) must never be used in the designated “Gluten-Free” area of the kitchen or on “Gluten-Free” items.

B. Procedure

1. Proper Hand Washing and Glove Use

- a. Hands must be washed prior to any food handling and in addition, immediately prior to handling gluten free foods.
- b. Hands should be wet with warm or cool water and soap applied.
- c. Lather hands by rubbing them together with the soap, being sure to lather the backs of hands, between fingers, and under fingernails.
- d. Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds. If a timer or clock is not available, humming the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice, is a way to count the 20 seconds of time.
- e. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water for a count of 10 seconds.
- f. Dry your hands using a clean towel.
- g. If food that is to be handled is ready to eat or prepared foods (foods that are not being cooked) gloves must be worn.
- h. Once hands are washed and dried put on a pair of latex-free gloves prior to any food handling.

2. Food Allergens (other than Wheat/Gluten)

- a. Everyday a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency room. It is vital that precautions are taken for the safety of everyone.
- b. It is important for people with allergies to know what ingredients are in foods that are distributed during pot lucks, coffee hour and other special events where food is plated and served.
- c. Laminated card tents, with the top 8 allergens listed, will be utilized to identify what allergens are contained in specific foods being served. In addition, "Meat" (which is not an allergen) will be listed on the laminated card tents to identify foods containing meat products. If no allergens or meat exist, then the "None" box on the laminated tent card will be checked. A WET Erase marker will be used to check the box next to the allergen(s) the food contains. The laminated card tent will then be placed on the table next to the food item.
- d. Other than gluten free, foods containing other allergens can be placed on the main table but the food must be labeled with a laminated tent card.

- e. There must be a serving utensil for each food being placed on the table and that utensil used for ONLY that food.
- f. People with identified food allergens will be given priority getting their food before others, at pot lucks and other dinners.

3. Wheat Allergy/Gluten-Free

- a. Wheat/Gluten is a very serious allergen for many people. It is extremely important for people preparing, handling and plating food items to thoroughly understand the issues surrounding wheat/gluten allergies and cross-contamination.
- b. People with a wheat/gluten allergy (celiac or non-celiac gluten sensitivity), must follow a 100% gluten free diet in order to avoid the symptoms and damage to their body that comes from eating these allergens. Even crumbs containing gluten can cause severe reactions in some people with these allergies.
- c. Cross-contamination occurs when an allergen is unintentionally transferred from one food to another. Even a tiny amount of a wheat/gluten can cause a severe and potentially life threatening reaction.
- d. IMMEDIATELY prior to handling any gluten-free food, hands must be washed and dried according to section A of this procedure. Once hands are washed for the purpose of handling gluten free foods, one must not touch any other “gluten” containing food. If that occurs, that individual must wash their hands AGAIN, PRIOR TO handling the gluten free food. After hands are washed, gloves must be donned.
- e. At First UU, to more easily identify “gluten free” plates, **any and all gluten free food** will be served on specially designated **SQUARE PLATES/DISHES**. These plates/dishes are **ONLY TO BE USED FOR GLUTEN FREE FOODS**. Prior to placing any gluten free food on these plates/dishes, the plates/dishes to be used should be washed and dried. These plates/dishes will be stored in the “Gluten Free Section” of the First UU kitchen.
- f. All Gluten Free snacks will be stored in the “Gluten Free” plastic bin and the bin housed in the “Gluten Free Section” of the kitchen. This section is located on the opposite side of the kitchen from the non-gluten free food.

- g. All Gluten Free food handling will take place in the designated “Gluten Free Area” of the kitchen. Gluten Free foods and plates/dishes must NEVER be placed in any other area of the kitchen and plates/dishes and foods from other areas of the kitchen that are not Gluten Free must never be placed in the “Gluten Free Area”. Prior to preparing or handling foods in the “Gluten Free” area, the surfaces in the “Gluten Free” area must be cleaned.
- h. For all dinners, pot-lucks, and coffee hours, there will be a separate “Gluten Free” table set up that will contain ONLY “Gluten Free” items.
- i. Serving utensils being used for “Gluten Free” foods must be washed and dried BEFORE use. These utensils must never leave the “Gluten Free” table to be used for any other foods.
- j. No other food must ever be placed on the ‘Gluten Free” table unless it can be confirmed that it is “Gluten Free”.
- k. Whenever possible, single serve snacks of “Gluten Free” items should be made available. Once removed from its packaging, food that is “Gluten Free” may be cross contaminated and, as such, cannot be guaranteed to be “Gluten Free” anymore. Therefore, any “Gluten Free” food that is taken out of its packaging must be consumed at that event or discarded. As an alternative and to reduce waste, this food may be taken home by individuals who request it and identify themselves as not Gluten/Wheat Sensitive/Allergic.
- l. People with wheat/gluten allergies will be given priority getting their food before others, at pot lucks and other dinners.

4. Buffet Style Dinners and Pot Lucks

- a. Anytime there is a First UU sponsored dinner or pot luck where people will obtain their food buffet style, people with wheat/gluten allergies are given first priority at the food table before anyone else.
- b. People with any other allergen (other than wheat/gluten) will be given second priority at the food table.
- c. Once everyone with allergies has gotten their food, the rest of the guests will be able to serve themselves.
- d. Any food that is left over may be taken home by attendees.

5. Clean up

- a. Any food that has been served and is left over must be discarded or taken home by attendees.
- b. All areas of the kitchen must be cleaned with disinfectant spray and paper towels.
- c. The plates and utensils used for “Gluten Free” foods must be washed thoroughly with dish detergent and warm/hot water in the designated “Gluten Free” dish pans.
- d. Dishes and plates will be washed with a “Handi-wipe” style cloth and it will be discarded at the end of its use for that meal/event.
- e. All dishes, plates and silverware are either air dried in the “Gluten Free Area” or can be dried with a clean towel that has not come into contact with any gluten.

6. Gluten Free/Allergen Training

- a. All people who will be involved with serving, handling, preparing or plating “Gluten Free” and other allergen free foods will attend a training session where they will get more in-depth training about Gluten and other allergies, cross contamination and other special concerns.
- b. The training session will be described in a separate document and once someone completes the training and demonstrates a good understanding of the issues surrounding food allergens, they will receive a certificate and be considered “First UU Safer Food/Allergen Certified”
- c. Every effort will be made to have at least one “First UU Safer Food/Allergen Certified” person present during pot lucks, other dinners and coffee hours to oversee the food handling process with respect to allergens during that time.