

Hygiene Guidelines on Preparation of Desserts

Objective:

Desserts are usually handmade from a large variety of food ingredients. Some types of desserts are subject to high risks of microbiological contamination due to the lack of heating during preparation or because that they are cooled and stored for a period of time after heating and do not need to be reheated before serving. These guidelines are intended to remind the food industry about the food hygiene and safety issues they should pay attention in the preparation and display of desserts.

Scope of Applicability:

The Guidelines applies to establishments engaged in production and sale of desserts, including premises for takeaway and dining-in, and premises that offer training in making desserts, etc.

Definition:

Desserts: All sweet food products for immediate consumption, whether served cold or hot, such as puddings, cakes and various types of sweet soups.

Content:

1. Smart Purchase and Receipt

- Purchase hygienic and good quality food ingredients from reputable suppliers;
- Check the information on the invoices to see if it is consistent with the received goods upon receipt;
- Check whether the food ingredients are stored at proper temperatures. Make sure they are in good condition, uncontaminated or undamaged;
- Reject food ingredients which are spoiled, expired or from unknown sources;
- If necessary, request the suppliers to provide relevant documents, such as health certificates, certificates of origins and laboratory reports;
- Retain purchase and sales records or relevant receipts for source tracing by competent government authorities whenever necessary.

2. Careful Preparation

- When making desserts and ice cubes, use water that comply with the provisions of the Decree-Law No. 46/96/M “Macao Water Supply and Drainage Regulations” (Annex 1: Quality standards and regulations of water supply for human consumption);
- Use separate utensils to handle ready-to-eat food and non ready-to-eat food;
- Do not use expired food ingredients or those that look mouldy or spoiled;
- Wash and clean food ingredients and utensils thoroughly;
- Cook food ingredients thoroughly;
- Avoid preparing excessive amount of food ingredients or desserts or too far in advance;
- Use pasteurized eggs and egg products or dried egg powder to prepare ready-to-eat desserts that do not require heating;
- Transfer opened canned food ingredients to another suitable container before storing them in the refrigerator;
- Do not mix freshly prepared desserts with those that have been prepared earlier.

3. Proper Storage and Display

1) Food ingredients

- Keep food ingredients that need to be stored at room temperature in a cool and well-ventilated place to avoid exposure to direct sunlight;
- Properly cover and store fresh and perishable food ingredients in the refrigerator (refrigeration temperature below 5°C and freezing temperature at or below -18°C) ;
- Keep ready-to-eat food and non ready-to-eat food in separate containers with lids. Preferably store them in different refrigerators, or in the same refrigerator with ready-to-eat food on the shelf above non ready-to-eat food;
- Always check the expiry date and storage temperature of fresh cream;
- Follow the “first-in, first-out” principle and use the food ingredients with earlier expiry dates first.

2) Desserts for cold serving

- Properly cover and store cold-serving desserts in the refrigerator at below 5°C and keep them away from non ready-to-eat food or semi-finished food;
- Cool cold-serving desserts as soon as possible after heating, and store them in the refrigerator properly;
- Follow the “first-in, first-out” principle in selling or using the desserts.

3) Desserts for hot serving

- Keep cooked hot-serving desserts in an insulated cabinet or water bath at above 60°C;
- Thoroughly reheat desserts that are cooled with core temperature reaching at least 75°C or above. Do not reheat more than once.

4. Time Control

- During food production and operation, shorten the duration that ready-to-eat foods such as fresh cream, custard sauce and sliced fruits are left in the temperature danger zone (between 5°C and 60°C) as far as possible as they are potentially hazardous. When inevitable, follow the 2-hour/ 4-hour rule¹:
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for less than 2 hours should be stored in the refrigerator or used immediately;
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for 2 to 4 hours should be used immediately;
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for more than 4 hours should be discarded.

5. Personal Hygiene

- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food;
- Wear clean and light-coloured outer clothing or protective overalls;
- Do not wear rings, bracelets, watches or other accessories;
- Do not wear nail polish or false nails;
- Use waterproof dressings to cover open wounds properly;
- Do not handle money while handling food;
- Do not taste food with fingers;

¹ Reference: GL 001 DSA 2019 "Hygiene Guidelines on Time and Temperature Control"

- Suspend from handling food when suffering from symptoms of illness such as running nose, coughing, diarrhoea, vomiting and fever.

6. Utensils, Equipment and Environmental Hygiene

- All work surfaces should be made of impermeable, easy to clean material and kept well above the ground;
- The surfaces of all utensils and equipment that come into contact with food should be cleaned and disinfected before use;
- Replace damaged or cracked utensils;
- Regularly check the temperature of the refrigerator to make sure that the food is stored at the correct temperature;
- Use lidded rubbish bins, and empty and disinfect them regularly;
- Do not keep pets at food premises.

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