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**Follow up information from Registered Sanitarian (8/12/20 webinar on Reopening Schools Food Safety Guidance)**

1 message

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**Stenberg, Molly** <stenberg@montana.edu>  
Reply-To: MTLunchLine@opiconnect.org  
To: MT Lunchline <mtlunchline@opiconnect.org>  
Cc: Clay Hickman <chickman@mt.gov>

Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 3:06 PM

Hello Everyone,

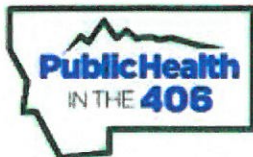
Nina Heinzinger, Registered Sanitarian from the MT Dept. of Public Health and Human Services, was the guest speaker on our Food Safety webinar last week. Below, you will find her answers to the list of questions from the webinar.

**From Nina: If individuals have further questions on schools, they may send them to our School program lead, Sadie Overlie, at [Sadie.Overlie@mt.gov](mailto:Sadie.Overlie@mt.gov) and she will direct them to the appropriate individuals to answer the questions.**

**All answers are from a statewide perspective. County health departments may have more restrictive orders in place and before implementing a new food service plan the plan should be discussed with your local health department.**

1. Are salad bars allowed? Would it be allowed if the staff serves the students rather than them serving themselves?
  - a. Salad bars meeting the requirements in the retail food code are allowed. Self Service buffet style service should not be used until phase 3.
2. Can school staff place the items in small containers and then allow the students to pick the items that they want (no food would be exposed—i.e. all in small plastic covered container)
  - a. Yes
2. Can the students take their own milk for the milk cooler?
  - a. Self-service is not recommended, a set up that prevents multiple kids from touching the same milk could be used and we recommend working with your local health department on specifics.
3. Can students take their own silverware from the silverware containers? Their own trays from a stack of trays? Their own napkins?
  - a. Self-service is not recommended.
4. How about vending machines? Can kids get their own drinks from vending machines? Any precautions?
  - a. Vending machines are not prohibited. We recommend hand sanitizer and that facilities wipe down commonly touched surfaces frequently.
5. Guidance on use of water fountains.

- a. The use of water fountains is not prohibited and has not been associated with known clusters or outbreaks. Out of an abundance of caution we recommend social distancing while waiting in line and the use of single service cups or personal water bottles, hand sanitizer, and the cleaning of commonly touched surfaces frequently.
6. How about water bottle filling stations? What if they have a handle?
  - a. Water bottle filling stations are not prohibited. Any commonly touched surface should be wiped down frequently and hand sanitizer or handwashing should be made available after use.
7. How about microwaves—can they still be available to kids in the lunch room?
  - a. The use of microwaves are not prohibited. Commonly touched surfaces should be cleaned frequently, hand sanitizer and handwashing should be made available and social distancing should be practiced in line.
8. Does food need to be covered when carried through the lunch room or can it be on open trays?
  - a. There is no requirement that food must be covered while moving through the lunch room. Food has not been identified as a source of transmission for COVID-19.
9. Is there an all in one disinfecting and sanitizing food surface solution that can be used to clean tables between groups vs. a two-step option?
  - a. We recommend using the list of EPA approved disinfectants to find a product that works for you, make sure to read the label carefully to ensure it is approved in the setting you plan to use it in, and that it is applied to the surface appropriately.



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Thank you,