TOP 10

Ways to Manage Food Brought in by Visitors

Compiled by: Paula Bohlen, MS, RD, CSG, LDN

1. Understand the Regulation

In 2016, CMS introduced an additional F-tag; **F813 Food Safety Requirements**. This new regulation specifically covers food brought to residents by family and other visitors from outside the facility. CDM®, CFPP®s working in long-term care (LTC) should read F813 in its entirety.

2. Focus on Honoring Resident Rights

F550 Resident Rights says that we must respect a resident's individuality and assist residents with self-esteem and self-worth. Additionally, residents have the right to choose food from outside sources including takeout and food prepared by family and friends. If surveyors find that the facility did not allow residents to choose to accept food from any friends, family, visitors or other guests, they are instructed to consider a citation for violation of **F561 Self Determination**.

3. Focus on Food Safety

The intent of F813 is to ensure safe and sanitary food storage, handling, and consumption of foods brought to the facility for residents. The facility is responsible for food safety from the moment a food item enters the facility. If the facility fails to do so, the surveyors will consider citing both F812 Food Safety Requirements and F813.

4. Establish a Policy and Procedure

F813 specifies that the facility must have a policy regarding food brought to residents by family and other visitors. Ensure that your policy covers both elements: food safety and resident rights. ANFP has a sample policy posted here.

5. Communicate

F813 requires that residents be provided a copy of the policy in a form they can understand. Facilities might give residents and families a copy of the actual policy or develop a brochure or flyer with the content rephrased in a form that is more easily understood.

6. Educate Staff on Assisting Residents with Outside Foods

F813 requires that staff assist residents with accessing and consuming their personal outside food. This includes assistance with plating and reheating as well as any necessary assistance with eating the food. Staff must also be educated on safe food handling practices.

7. Educate Families and Visitors on Food Safety

F813 states that the facility has a responsibility to help family and visitors understand safe food handling such as safe cooling/reheating processes, hot/cold holding temperatures, preventing cross contamination, and hand hygiene.

The facility might create a brochure with this information or use existing materials from www.foodsafety.gov or another reputable source.

8. Know who Routinely Stores Food/Drink in Their Room or Common Areas

It is important that facilities understand which residents routinely store outside food at the facility. Upon admission, residents and families should be asked if they will be bringing food from the outside so that staff can effectively plan to monitor food safety.

9. Have an Effective Plan for Storing Food Once it is in the Building

Outside food is to be stored separately from facility food and must be stored according to food safety standards; this includes both refrigerated and shelf-stable items.

All items should be stored in containers with tight-fitting lids for pest control and to protect against cross-contamination. The container label must identify the contents and include appropriate date marking.

10. Use a Team Approach to Handling Outside Foods

While food and nutrition staff should lead the charge, handling outside foods is an interdisciplinary task. By their nature, outside foods are handled in the facility by a variety of staff, family, and visitors-not in the main kitchen by food and nutrition employees.

Food that is brought into a nursing home but was prepared by others must be handled according to accepted standards for food safety outlined in **F813**. Facility events including potluck dinners can be cited for food safety under **F812**.

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