

Camp Hygiene

This resource can help with the following Camping areas:

- Stage 2: I know about food hygiene
- Stage 3: I know about safe food storage
- Stage 5: I know how to store and cook food safely on camp

Camping is all about young people do as much for themselves as possible. This includes the “camp chores” like putting up the tents, collecting firewood & water, fire lighting & cooking your own meal, making camp gadgets and doing the washing up etc. Not only does this give youth members a sense of achievement, it contributes to them becoming more self-reliant by developing life skills such as problem solving, creativity, team work and skills sharing etc.



Using a recognised scout campsite will also make it easier for both inexperienced Scouters and young people as the campsites will have many facilities not available on a green field site. Facilities included such items as toilets & showers, waste disposal bins, fridge freezers, wet weather shelter, firewood & metal altar fires. They also have sinks with hot water for washing pots and utensils. The campsites also have staff who will be glad to help you implement scout camping where the use of small groups and learning by doing are key.

Camp hygiene is an area where Scouter input can help young people grasp the main points say by including the topic in the programme of weekly meetings leading up to a camp.

Topics such as

1. Food storage
2. Food prep
3. Waste disposal
4. Ablutions & toilets

Food storage

Do the youth members know the difference between perishable and non-perishable food items?

- Non-perishables (jam, Cornflakes, tea, sugar, bread, biscuits, hot chocolate) can be stored in your patrol box which has been turned on its side and into a simple camp larder with shelves. It goes without saying that if you are using a patrol box as a food larder then it is no place to store the fire lighters or stove fuel.
- For perishables such as meat, milk, veg, butter, sausages, they should be purchased just prior to use or most campsites have fridge freezer facilities available or where you can get cooler packs to use in your cool box.
- It is important that you have separate storage areas for cooked and un-cooked food and especially chicken. These need to be



stored separately from the rest of the food to avoid the possibility of cross contamination of harmful bacteria. Cool boxes don't tend to have shelves or compartments so perhaps you will need several of these or large lidded lunch boxes for storing raw meat as you don't want any meat juices contaminating the other items.

- A better idea for younger scouts is to work out a less "risky" menu with meals such as veg stir fry, macaroni cheese, pancakes, French toast all easy low risk meals for youngsters to prepare.

Food prep

Food needs to be prepared in a good camp kitchen and off the ground. Campsites can get muddy or may have had animals on then so extra care needs to be taken when preparing food out of doors. Camp furniture and simple camp gadgets such as camp table & benches, dressers and a wash hand basin all help in proper food preparation. Learning how to construct gadgets can form part of your weekly meetings leading up to a camp.

Again best practice needs to be followed when handling food and in particular when preparing any meal containing raw meat such as chicken and mince. If worried, try a simpler menu when younger scouts are involved in preparing the meals



If you are using meat then separate coloured chopping boards are required for preparing meat, veg etc. and make sure you don't use the same knife.

Clean tables before and after meals and it is a good idea to have the wash basin stand close to the food prep area so utensils and hands can be washed regularly in hot soapy water. Clean tea towels are also essential items. Regular hand washing is probably the most important thing to remember. A hand sanitiser is also a good idea as often the fire needs to be stoked while the food is being prepped.

Meals containing meat such as chicken and burgers need to be thoroughly cooked before serving. Not just cooked on the outside which is often the case with barbecues. It is a good idea to cut into chicken and burgers before serving to ensure they are thoroughly cooked through. As you prepare a meal keep the food prep area clean and tidy putting waste into the correct waste bin.

Waste segregation unit

- Waste management is easy if you make a simple waste segregation unit on your site. This is made up of several bins so you can segregate your waste and which makes doing the right thing at the end of the camp so much easier.



- You need bins for recyclables (cardboard, tin cans, paper and plastic), one for clean glass bottles & Jars and another for general waste as well as a small container for use batteries.
- Most scout campsites will have wheelie bins where you can dispose of your waste properly.



Waste water filter/grease trap.

A real problem on any campsites is small particles of food from draining pasta or from dish washing being poured into the long grass where it becomes a food source for rodents (rats). The site then has to use rodenticide and there is a real possibility of this affecting non target species such as squirrels and birds of prey. This problem can be avoided if you make a suspended grease trap or waste water filter. This filter is simply a suspended plastic bag filled with grass, leaves or ferns and perforated at the bottom. You pour your dish water and drain your pasta through this and it sieves out the food and grease particles while allowing the water to drain way into the soil. The bag can be disposed of with your general waste at the end of the camp.

Ablutions and toilets

Many young people find using a toilet tent and chemical toilet off putting. One of the real advantages of using a recognised scout campsite is that they have good toilet and shower facilities. And lots of hot water where hands can be washed. They also have dish washing sinks with hot water where you can properly wash all your cutlery, pots and pans.