This guidance provides best practices for COVID-19 prevention in departmental eating spaces (e.g., lunch and break rooms). Food establishments, medical centers, and residence hall follow their locations/unit specific procedures. Individuals must continue to follow requirements of the University’s COVID-19 Prevention Plan, the UW Face Covering Policy and building signage.

**PREPARE EATING SPACES**

- **Physical Distance:** It is recommended that eating spaces are identified or furniture oriented to allow for some spaces with physical distance for those who may prefer to distance while eating and drinking. Physical distancing is recommended for those who are not fully vaccinated. Physical distancing is required in health care, child care, youth and K-12 settings, regardless of vaccination status. In these settings, furniture should be placed to support the distancing requirement in eating areas.

- **Wearing a face covering is required in health care, child care, youth and K-12 settings regardless of vaccination status,** except when actively eating or drinking.

- Identify a clearly defined, ventilated area or room for eating and drinking; ideally with a closeable door and/or separate from other work spaces. See the HVAC FAQ for more details.

- Consider designating multiple eating spaces if possible to prevent crowding and allow for individuals to distance from others if they choose to.

- **Post signage** detailing expectations for the use of the space. Signage should include face covering requirements for the area, hand hygiene, and staying home if sick.

- Provide cleaning supplies and disinfectant wipes to clean and disinfect high-touch and shared surfaces regularly.

- If the eating area has a sink, ensure it is stocked with soap and paper towels; otherwise, provide hand sanitizer.

- Provide no-touch waste disposal bins.

**SPACE USE & FOOD SHARING**

- Food and drink may be served during meetings and events. Units/responsible parties **must** advise attendees of the applicable COVID-19 requirements and prevention measures for the event space. This includes reminding individuals of key times to wash or sanitize hands. Consider placing hand sanitizer near food service areas to use before and after handling utensils if needed.

- When eating together, consider options with lower risk, such as attendees bringing their own food and/or drinks, using single-use/single-serving options, or having one individual serve shared food.

- Non-fully vaccinated individuals may choose to (and are recommended to) maintain 6 feet of distance from others when actively eating and/or drinking. All individuals have the option to move away from crowded areas while actively eating and/or drinking. Provide space for individuals to physically distance if they choose to. It is not appropriate to ask individuals about their vaccination status.

- Arrange for food distribution/dish drop-off points (e.g., in multiple locations) to limit crowding.

- Self-service and food sharing **may not** occur in child care settings, K-12, youth programs or when youth are present. In these areas, individually plated meals or grab-and-go meals are recommended.

- Members of a closed UW group (a unit, a student organization, a lab, a department) may share home-prepared food with each other. Visit the EH&S Temporary Food Service Permit webpage and FAQs to determine if you need a permit to serve food/beverages at a meeting or event. If unsure, contact phdept@uw.edu for guidance.

Contact EH&S at 206.543.7262 or ehsdept@uw.edu for more information.