

newsworthy trends

‘Desktop Dining’ Trend Demands New Office Eating Etiquette

(NAPSA)—For many working Americans, eating a meal is just another task to juggle during a busy workday of e-mails, phone calls, meetings and deadlines. And as more employees opt to multi-task their way through breakfast, lunch and even dinner, “desktop dining” has quickly become a mainstay of corporate culture.

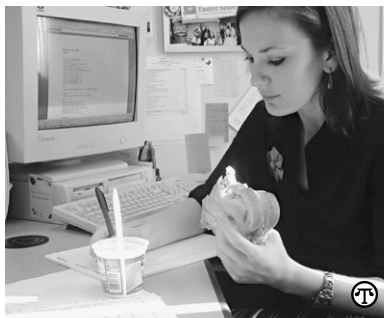
A new survey conducted by the American Dietetic Association and the ConAgra Foods Foundation revealed a majority of working Americans eat lunch (67 percent) and snack throughout the day (61 percent) at their desks, while more than one out of three typically find breakfast the first task on their workplace to-do list. And office demands are winning out over dining ambience for the small percentage (10 percent of men, seven percent of women) who dine desktop for dinner, as well.

“In many cases, desktops have replaced kitchen tables as the primary place to eat meals, but that doesn’t mean we should allow bacteria to work overtime,” says Carolyn O’Neil, registered dietitian and national spokesperson for ADA/ConAgra Foods’ *Home Food Safety...It’s in Your Hands*® program. “It’s important that your mealtime multi-tasking also includes practicing proper food safety techniques.”

Fridge Faux Pas

The traditional lunch hour may be a thing of the past, but when it comes to protecting themselves against foodborne illnesses, many professionals are still “out to lunch.”

According to the ADA/ConAgra



Foods survey, the most popular brown bag options for working Americans include meat and cheese sandwiches (69 percent), leftovers (64 percent) and salads (37 percent)—all of which can spoil if not properly refrigerated.

Yet, survey results show that nearly 30 percent of Americans who bring their lunch to work don’t store them in the office refrigerator. And of those, more than four out of five typically leave their lunch unrefrigerated for more than three hours before eating—which means foods may be spoiled even before the first bite.

Office Eating Etiquette

The same food safety rules also apply to shared foods. From staff birthday celebrations to post-meeting leftovers, these community treats are an office staple—but they also can be dangerous business if perishable foods are not properly refrigerated.

According to the ADA/ConAgra Foods survey, foods are left around the office to share at least once a week in nearly seven out of 10 offices. And in most of these cases (68 percent), shared foods sit out for more than two hours or until they’re finished—with more

than three out of five Americans saying they feel comfortable eating the foods.

“Our hectic work schedules may have changed the way we eat, but the basic rules of food safety are still the same,” says O’Neil. “As kitchens continue to extend beyond the home and into the office, Americans need to re-think their desktop dining habits and make sure proper office eating etiquette is on their daily to-do list.”

Be the boss of your brown bag. From the time you make your lunch at home—assuming it contains perishable food items, as many brown bags do—don’t let more than two hours pass before you put it in the refrigerator. Also, don’t let lunchtime leftovers remain unrefrigerated for more than two hours.

For More Tips on Desktop Dining

The ADA/ConAgra Foods *Home Food Safety...It’s in Your Hands* program educates consumers that home food safety is a serious issue and provides solutions so Americans can easily and safely handle food in their own kitchens. This program complements government-sponsored food safety initiatives that speak to the leading critical food-handling violations by emphasizing the following four key messages: 1) Wash hands often; 2) Keep raw meats and ready-to-eat foods separate; 3) Cook to proper temperatures; 4) Refrigerate promptly below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

For more information, visit www.homefoodsafety.org.