



CATERING AND FOOD SAFETY

A great part of any sport or active recreation experience involves the sharing of mealtimes. Sometimes we may be fortunate in having all the meals cooked by professionals, but this does take away the opportunity of all taking turns in sharing in the preparation of meals.

Self-catering does enable the organisation of a menu to suit weather conditions and food preferences and sharing the communal experience of preparing your own meals. This can provide the opportunity to develop skills and to participate in preparation activities, not otherwise experienced.

Adequate food and drink at regular intervals is vital to the maintenance of healthy and happy participants. A change in weather conditions may require an adjustment to the amount of food and drink provided. More drinks should be made available in warm weather, remember the participant may not be able to express their need for a drink or some food.

Keep the following in mind when self-catering:



At least one person involved in the food preparation and cooking needs to hold a current certificate in food safety and handling.



Ensure that meals are well balanced and be aware of how food additives may affect some participants. Salt, sugar and some preservatives may react with medication. Participant information forms will alert you if there are special needs for a participant.



Involve participants as much as possible in the planning and preparation of meals. Be prepared to spend the time required to allow participants to assist. This may mean starting meal preparation well in advance. Often the role of the leader will be to instruct and demonstrate new skills rather than taking on the cooking role themselves.



Share the task of food preparation. Enable all participants the opportunity to participate and make sure that it is not left to the same few.



Emphasise the need for hygienic procedures during food preparation. Washing of hands and the use of surgical gloves will reduce the possibility of food contamination.



The Victorian Government has created a set of food safety guidelines for groups involved in sport and recreation activities. For more information contact Food Safety Victoria at www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/bus/keeping.htm