

**Dietary – Injury Prevention for Cooks****What does a cook do?**

The main duties of cooks in restaurants, hotels, healthcare facilities and schools include the following:

- Plan and prepare menus, and determine food portions and quantities needed.
- Pay attention to special dietary needs, if applicable.
- Monitor and order supplies.
- Clean up kitchen or work area.
- Supervise kitchen staff.

**What are some health and safety issues for cooks?**

Working with food presents its own unique set of potential hazards. Some of the main ones are:

- Handling raw meat and poultry.
- Excessive standing.
- Lifting or carrying heavy trays.
- Working in extreme temperatures.
- Slips, trips and falls.
- Stress.
- Working alone.
- Working with knives, mincers, and other dangerous tools or equipment.
- Risk of burns or fire from ovens, deep-fat fryers, and steam from pots.
- Risk of accidental radiation leaks from microwave ovens.
- Exposure to cleaning products, pest control products, or other chemicals.
- Working in awkward positions or performing repetitive manual tasks.

**What are some preventive measures for cooks?**

- Wash hands frequently.
- Learn safe lifting techniques.
- Know how to work with all equipment and tools required for the job.
- Keep the work area tidy.
- Conduct regular inspections of the equipment and identify defects. Have equipment removed from service until fixed or replaced.
- Take breaks. Change tasks to reduce repetitive strain injuries.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment, including safety shoes with non-skid soles, and eye protection.
- Keep a first-aid kit within easy access.
- Keep a mobile phone or other alternative means to contact a designated person when working alone.
- Know how to report hazards.

**What are some good general safe work practices?**

- Practice safe lifting techniques.
- Inspect the work area before each shift.
- Exercise caution when working with knives and other sharp equipment.
- Store tools in the designated areas after use.
- Use, maintain and store personal protective equipment according to manufacturers' recommendations.
- Follow safety rules.
- Follow good housekeeping procedures.
- Participate in WHMIS/GHS education and training. Read the safety data sheet any hazardous product that you use and follow recommended safety precautions.

source: *Cooks* ([http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/occup\\_workplace/cooks.html](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/occup_workplace/cooks.html)), Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), 2014. Reproduced with the permission of CCOHS, 2015

**Safety Talk Discussion**

**Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!**