

Policy Statement

Policy statements and clinical policies are the official policies of the American College of Emergency Physicians and, as such, are not subject to the same peer review process as articles appearing in the journal. Policy statements and clinical policies of ACEP do not necessarily reflect the policies and beliefs of *Annals of Emergency Medicine* and its editors.

Food and Drink for Staff in the Emergency Department

Approved April 2020

Originally approved April 2020

0196-0644/\$-see front matter

Copyright © 2020 by the American College of Emergency Physicians.

Food and Drink for Staff in the Emergency Department



[Ann Emerg Med. 2020;76:e75.]

Understanding that staff may have limited access to proper breaks, depending on patient volume and acuity, as well as the importance of hydration and nutrition during a clinician's shift, the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) strongly advocates for organizations to permit and support policies that allow for food and beverages to be kept and ingested by staff members at their workstations in the emergency department (ED).

Although food and beverages should be permitted at ED workstations, relevant polices should consider the following:

- Food and beverages should be stored separately (eg, refrigerators, cupboards) from areas designated for specimen storage and processing. Similarly, specimen

handling must be performed at the bedside, in dirty utility rooms, or dedicated areas separate from workstations where food and drink may be consumed.

- Food and beverages should not be consumed in areas dedicated to the storage or administration of medications or specimen collection or processing.
- Staff must be responsible for handling food and beverages with appropriate care to prevent spills that may damage electronic equipment, sensitive documents, or other materials on the desktops.
- Appropriate hand hygiene must be performed before and after patient encounters or handling of specimens, as well as before and after touching or consuming food or beverages.

Approved April 2020

Originally approved April 2020

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annemergmed.2020.06.014>