

# East Mamprusi Municipal Assembly

## Environmental Health & Sanitation Unit

**Report on Medical Screening for Food and Beverage Handlers**

**Compiled By**

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**24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2026**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Medical screening for food and beverage handlers is a critical component of public health and safety. This practice serves several key functions that are vital for preventing illness, protecting consumers, and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.

## **1.2 Importance of Medical Screening**

### **1. Public Health Protection:**

Food handlers are often the last line of defense against foodborne illnesses. Certain pathogens can reside in individuals without causing noticeable symptoms, making them potential carriers. Medical screenings help identify such carriers, thereby minimizing the risk of them contaminating food and harming patrons.

### **2. Preventing Outbreaks:**

By conducting thorough screenings, establishments can catch and manage infectious diseases early. This proactive approach significantly reduces the likelihood of foodborne outbreaks, which can result in severe consequences for both consumers and businesses. Timely interventions can stem the spread of illnesses such as norovirus or salmonella among staff and, subsequently, customers.

### **3. Compliance with Regulations:**

Many local and federal health departments require medical screening as part of food safety regulations. Compliance with these regulations not only helps maintain public trust but also shields businesses from potential fines or legal repercussions. Establishments that uphold these standards demonstrate their commitment to health and safety.

### **4. Employee Health Monitoring:**

Regular medical screenings empower employers to monitor the health of their food handlers. This process ensures that individuals exhibiting symptoms of contagious illnesses are identified before they can affect others. By prioritizing employee health, businesses create a safer environment for all.

## **1.3 Purpose of Medical Screening**

### **1. Detection of Illnesses:**

One of the primary purposes of medical screening is to detect communicable diseases among food handlers. Conditions such as hepatitis A and other gastrointestinal infections can be transmitted through food. By identifying these illnesses, establishments can take immediate action to prevent outbreaks.

### **2. Health Education:**

Medical screenings also provide a valuable opportunity for health education. During the screening process, food handlers can receive information on hygiene practices, the importance of personal health, and how to prevent the spread of illness. This knowledge empowers employees to make informed decisions regarding their health and work practices.

### **3. Risk Assessment:**

By systematically assessing the health of food handlers, employers can better understand and manage workplace health risks. This ongoing evaluation helps maintain a safe environment, contributing to overall employee and customer well-being.

### **4. Encouraging Healthy Practices:**

Regular medical checks can instill a culture of health consciousness within the workforce. Food handlers who understand the importance of their role in preventing illness are more likely to adopt and maintain healthy practices. This proactive approach can lead to reduced absenteeism and enhanced productivity, benefiting both employees and employers.

## **1.4 Aims of the Medical Screening**

The primary objective of this initiative is to prevent the transmission of communicable and infectious diseases, such as typhoid fever, cholera, tuberculosis, hepatitis, and dysentery, through the provision of food to the general public.

## **1.5 Objectives**

- To educate food and beverage handlers about health and safety practices.

- To conduct medical laboratory screenings and provide counseling to food handlers.
- To certify food handlers upon successful completion of the screening process.
- To compile data from the screening results and formulate recommendations for future health promotion initiatives targeting food handlers.

## **1.6 Target Group**

The target groups include but not limited to the following:

1. Sachet water producers, distributors and retailers
2. Alcoholic and soft drinks manufacturers and distributors and retailers.
3. Restaurant, chop bar and joint foods operators.
4. Hotels, pubs food and drink handlers.
5. Fufu, pepper, tomato and corn millers.
6. Bakery and fryers.
7. Butchers, barbecue and kebab sellers.
8. Fried yam/rice sellers.
9. Cooked and mashed kenkey (ice kenkey sellers).
10. Cold store operators
11. Fish mongers and fryers
12. Drinking bar operators
13. Institutional canteen staff
14. School feeding programme workers
15. Provision store operators
16. Fruits and vegetables sellers
17. Ice Cream distributors and sellers
18. Drug manufacturers and herbalists
19. 19. churches and mosques canteen staffs
20. Others.

## **1.7 Methodology/Approach**

Prior to the program's launch, awareness efforts were conducted by the Information Service Department using an information van that moved to various communities. This outreach occurred two weeks before the program began.

During the program, all participants—specifically food and drink handlers—received education on several key topics, including business management, personal hygiene, food safety, environmental safety, and nutrition.

Additionally, participants underwent medical screening, which included:

- Collection of blood samples for Typhoid Fever testing
- Collection of blood samples for Hepatitis B screening
- Measurement of blood pressure
- Assessment of body temperature

## **1.8 Benefits and Outcomes**

The initiative offers several key advantages:

- **Health Awareness:** Participants, including food and beverage handlers, gain valuable insights into their health status.
- **Community Health Data:** Provides local health centers with crucial information about the prevalence of specific infections and diseases.
- **Understanding Local Conditions:** Enables identification of disease conditions in various communities within the district or municipality.
- **Disease Prevention:** Assists in reducing the transmission rates of diseases among the population.
- **Food Safety Practices:** Educates food and beverage handlers on the importance of food safety and maintaining good personal hygiene.

## 1.9 Human Resources

The project employed qualified medical professionals, including nurses, biomedical scientists, public health specialists, and additional staff members.

Locations such as churches, market squares, funeral grounds, and social centers were utilized to gather participants. Community leaders, including youth coordinators, assembly members, chiefs, and elders, were engaged to raise awareness and facilitate the mobilization of food and drink handlers.

## 2.0 Laboratory Investigations Conducted

The following laboratory tests were performed:

- Widal Test for Typhoid Fever
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C

**Table 1: Medical Screened Results**

ZONE	TYPHOID (WIDAL)		HEPATITIS 'B'		HEPATITIS 'C'		BLOOD PRESSURE (BP)			TOTAL NUMBER SCREENED
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	HIGH	LOW	NOR MAL	
<b>Nalerigu</b>	19	191	6	204	4	206	20	3	187	<b>210</b>
<b>Sakogu</b>	9	36	3	42	4	41	4	1	40	<b>45</b>
<b>Gbintiri</b>	5	99	7	98	4	101	15	2	88	<b>105</b>
<b>Langbinsi</b>	6	144	3	147	4	146	10	5	135	<b>150</b>
<b>Gambaga</b>	12	111	4	119	3	120	20	4	119	<b>123</b>
<b>Total</b>	51	581	23	610	19	614	69	15	569	<b>633</b>

## **2.1 Conclusion**

In summary, medical screening for food and beverage handlers is an indispensable aspect of public health and safety programs. By safeguarding against foodborne illnesses, ensuring regulatory compliance, and promoting employee health, medical screenings play a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of the food service industry. Ultimately, this commitment to health not only protects consumers but also fosters a culture of safety within the workplace, contributing to a healthier community overall.