



Back-to-School Food Safety Reminders

Americans of all ages carry bag lunches to school or work. Ensure a safe lunch -- handle it safely.

Perishable food must be kept cold while commuting via bicycle, car, bus, subway or on foot. After arrival, perishable food should be kept cold.

Clean: Clean Hands, Clean Surfaces

- Wash hands with warm, soapy water before preparing or eating food.
- Wash utensils and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item.
- Use clean packaging and bags.



Separate: Don't Cross-Contaminate

- Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a different one for meat and poultry to avoid cross-contamination.
- At lunchtime, discard all used food packaging and paper bags. Do not reuse packaging because it could contaminate other food and cause foodborne illness.

Chill: Keep Lunches Cold

- Keeping food cold slows bacterial growth and keeps food safe.
- Harmful bacteria multiply rapidly in the "Danger Zone" — the temperatures between 40 and 140 °F.
- Keep perishable food refrigerated until time to leave home.
- Include a frozen gel pack or frozen juice box with perishable food in the insulated lunch bag or lunch box.
- Use an insulated soft-sided bag if possible. It's best for keeping food cold.
- Store perishable items in a refrigerator (if available) immediately upon arrival.



Keep Hot Lunches Hot

- Use an insulated container to keep hot food hot — 140 °F or above.
- Cook frozen convenience meals according to package instructions, including standing time if using a microwave.

Food Safety ALERT!

Perishable food transported without an ice source will stay safe only 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature is above 90 °F).

www.befoodsafe.org
1-888-MPHotline
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