



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.

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.



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.



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.

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.

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
(1-888-674-6854)

be food safe.

clean. separate.
 cook. chill.

www.befoodsafe.org

