

# Food Safety for Families

## Pack Food Safety with Your Child's School Lunch

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Dear Parents,

During the rush of a busy morning, packing a safe lunch for your child can be easily forgotten. Children are more likely than healthy adults to be victims of foodborne illness. Harmful bacteria rapidly grows and multiplies between temperatures of 40°F and 140°F. Your child's health is important. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Use the following tips to "Pack Food Safety with Your Child's School Lunch".



packaging and bags; they could contaminate other food and cause foodborne illness. Also, discard perishable leftovers unless they can be safely chilled immediately after lunch and when they are brought home.

### Keep Hot Foods Hot

If your child is taking hot soup, stew or chili for lunch, use an insulated container.

Parents should fill the container with boiling water, let it stand for a few minutes, empty it, and then put the piping hot food in the container. Keep the container closed until lunchtime so the food stays hot. Between uses wash the container and rinse it with boiling water.



### To Start, Pack Smart!

- \* You have lots of choices for packing lunches. Insulated, soft-sided lunch boxes or bags are best for keeping food cold, but metal or plastic lunch boxes and paper bags can also be used.



If using paper lunch bags, create layers by double bagging to insulate the food.

- \* Pack only the amount of food that will be eaten at lunch to avoid having leftovers.



- \* Cross-contamination can occur by reusing packaging materials such as: paper or plastic bags, food wraps and aluminum foil. At lunchtime, have your child discard all used food

Prepare the food the night before and store it in the refrigerator or freezer and pack the lunch in the morning. Keep foods cold by

using an ice pack or by freezing a juice box or sandwich. For best quality, do not freeze sandwiches containing mayonnaise, lettuce, or

tomatoes. Add these right before eating. Frozen juice boxes and sandwiches will be thawed by lunch.



## Packing Lunches



### FightBac!®

Bacteria (germs), viruses and parasites are everywhere in the environment! They are organisms that you cannot see, smell, or taste. In fact, they can contaminate food and cause life-threatening illness. Foodborne illness (food poisoning) can strike anyone, especially young children, pregnant women (it endangers their unborn babies too), older adults, and persons with weakened immune systems.

Before freezing a sandwich, spread a thin layer of butter or margarine on the bread to keep the bread from getting soggy, then put the sandwich in a plastic freezer bag. Frozen sandwiches can keep for three to four weeks.

### Food Guide

#### The following foods should be kept cold:

- Meat, fish, poultry, bologna, luncheon meat and hot dogs
- Milk
- Soft cheese
- Cooked vegetables and beans
- Rice
- Dressing and gravy
- Lunch combinations that include luncheon meats with crackers, cheese and condiments
- Yogurt and hard cheese
- Raw fruits and vegetables



#### The following foods freeze well:

- Cheddar cheese and cream cheese
- Peanut butter
- Fish
- Cooked egg yolks
- Sliced or ground meat or poultry



#### The following foods do not freeze well:

- Lettuce
- Tomatoes
- Carrots
- Mayonnaise
- Cooked egg whites
- Jelly



#### The following foods can be kept safely at room temperature until lunchtime:

- Peanut butter
- Baked goods
- Butter or margarine
- Dry cereal
- Pickles, mustard, and ketchup
- Dried meats, including beef jerky and pepperoni



### Packing Up Food Safety

In the morning rush, you can wrap up and pack food safety with your child's school lunch, keeping them healthy and happy!

