



OTTAWA
NETWORK FOR
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SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM



Understanding Food-Borne Illness and Low-Risk and High-Risk Foods

The following information will provide you with a good overview of food safety. It has been reviewed and approved by Ottawa Public Health.

1. Understanding Food-Borne Illnesses

Viruses - including Norovirus, the leading cause of food-borne illnesses, can and do travel on foods and cause food poisoning.

Bacteria - can multiply very quickly at room temperature, can live and multiply in food, are not killed by refrigeration or freezing and their toxins can possibly be dangerous after the food is cooked.

Bacteria and viruses can easily enter damaged fruits and vegetables, and some fruits harbor dangerous bacteria on the rind which can be spread to the inside.

► Please review **Appendix 1 – Fact Sheet** and **Appendix 2 – Chill**. These resources further explain simple practices that will help reduce the risk of food-borne illness in your nutrition program.

2. Understanding the Difference Between Low-Risk and High-Risk Foods

To prevent food-borne illnesses, it is important to understand the difference between low- and high-risk foods.

What is a Low-Risk Food?

Low-risk foods are considered non-hazardous and do not require refrigeration. They include items such as whole fruits and vegetables, baked goods, jams and preserves, granola, trail mix, nuts and seeds.

► It's important to remember that **low-risk foods are only low-risk when they are handled safely**.

What is a High-Risk Food?

High-risk foods are considered hazardous and require refrigeration at 4°C or below and proper internal cooking temperatures that kill bacteria and make these food items safe for human consumption. Examples of high-risk foods include dairy products, eggs, meat or meat products, poultry, fish and seafood and products containing them.

- ▶ Once a fruit or vegetable has been manipulated (cut-up) it becomes a high-risk food.

3. Allowances by Ottawa Public Health

As per Ontario Regulation 493/17, every operator of a food service premise shall ensure that there is at least one food handler or supervisor on the premise who has completed food handler training during every hour in which the premise is operating.

However, Ottawa Public Health has made allowances for ONFE School Breakfast Programs to serve dairy products, eggs and manipulated (cut-up) fruits and vegetables to be served without the legislated requirement ONLY IF proper safe food handling practices are followed.

- ▶ If your program is serving high-risk foods (other than those listed in the above paragraph), please contact your CDC immediately to review your safe food handling practices.

FACTSHEET



THE INVISIBLE ENEMY: BACTERIA

Despite the fact that Canada's food supply is among the safest in the world, sometimes the food we eat can make us sick. Under the right conditions, an invisible enemy called "BAC" (bacteria) may be present on foods.

Scientists have learned these important facts about bacteria:

- Bacteria are an integral part of our environment and play many beneficial, but sometimes harmful roles. They are found on all raw agricultural products.
- Harmful bacteria can be transferred from food to people, people to food, or from one food to another.
- Bacteria can grow rapidly at room temperature.
- Growth of harmful bacteria in food may be slowed or stopped by refrigerating or freezing.
- Foodborne illness can produce symptoms from mild to very serious. Illness can occur 30 minutes to two weeks after eating food containing harmful bacteria.
- People who are most likely to become sick from food-related illness are infants and young children, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems.

Everyone can prevent foodborne illness if they learn how to *Fight BAC!*TM

For more information about *Fight BAC!*TM visit the Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education website, at: www.canfightbac.org

FOUR SIMPLE STEPS TO *Fight BAC!*TM

CLEAN - Always wash your hands, utensils and cooking surfaces with soap and hot water before you handle food, repeatedly while you prepare it, and again when you've finished. Sanitize countertops, cutting boards and utensils with a mild bleach and water solution. All produce should be washed under cool running water prior to eating or cooking.

SEPARATE - Keep certain foods, like meats and their juices, separated from others during storage and preparation. Keep separate cutting boards for raw meats and vegetables. Always keep foods covered.

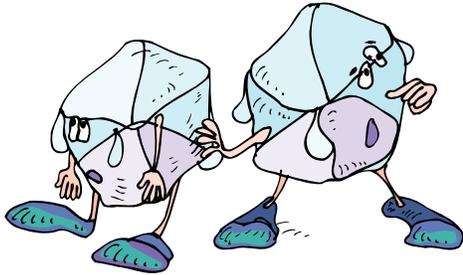
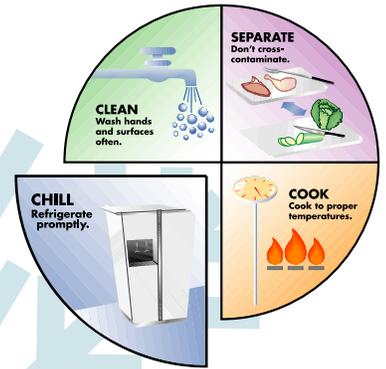
COOK - Prepare foods quickly, cook them thoroughly, and serve them immediately. Don't let foods linger at temperatures where bacteria can grow. The danger zone is between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F).

CHILL - Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours. Make sure the refrigerator is set at a temperature of 4°C (40°F) or colder, and keep the freezer set at -18°C (0°F).

Following these simple practices can help you reduce the risk of foodborne illness.



chill



1. The Big Chill

Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods and leftovers within two hours or less. Marinate foods in the refrigerator.

2. The Thaw Law

Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave if you will be cooking it immediately.

3. Divide and Conquer

Separate large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.

4. Avoid the Pack Attack

Don't overstuff the refrigerator. Cold air needs to circulate above and beneath food to keep it safe.



Cool Tip:
Cold foods should be kept at 4°C (40°F)





Serve and Preserve:

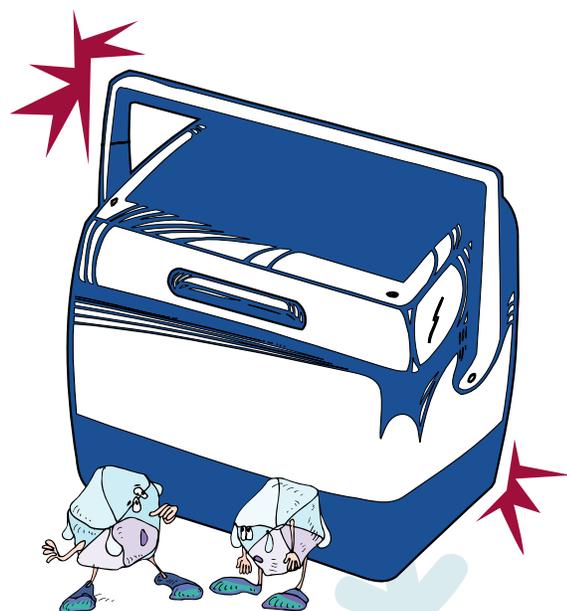
When serving cold food at a buffet, picnic or barbeque, keep these cool tips in mind:

- Cold foods should be kept at 4°C (40°F) or colder.
- Keep all perishable foods chilled right up until serving time.
- Place containers of cold food on ice for serving to make sure they stay cold.
- Refrigerate custards, cream pies and cakes with whipped cream or cream cheese frostings. Don't serve them if refrigeration is not possible.

Hit the Road:

When travelling with food, be aware that time, temperature and cold containers are key. Here are some tips to keep it cool:

- Keep frozen foods in the refrigerator or freezer until you are ready to go.
- Always use ice or cold packs and fill your cooler with food. A full cooler will maintain its cold temperatures longer than one that is partially filled.
- When travelling, keep the cooler in the air-conditioned passenger compartment of your car, rather than in a hot trunk.
- If you've asked for a 'doggie bag' to take home from a restaurant, the food contained in it should be refrigerated within two hours of serving.
- When running errands, do your grocery shopping last.



Fridge Quiz:

Put your knowledge of proper refrigeration to the test.

1. Should leftovers be placed directly in the refrigerator? Yes or No
2. Refrigeration prevents bacterial growth. True or False
3. At what temperature should refrigerated food be kept to slow down the growth of bacteria?

Answers:

1. Yes, but divide large quantities of food into shallow containers (8cm/3 inches or less) and allow to cool slightly before placing in the refrigerator.

2. False. Refrigeration slows, but does not prevent the growth of harmful bacteria.

3. Set the temperature cold enough to maintain an internal food temperature of 4°C (40°F) or colder. This will help to discourage the growth of foodborne bacteria. Be sure your refrigerator is in good working order.

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(613) 798-3042

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