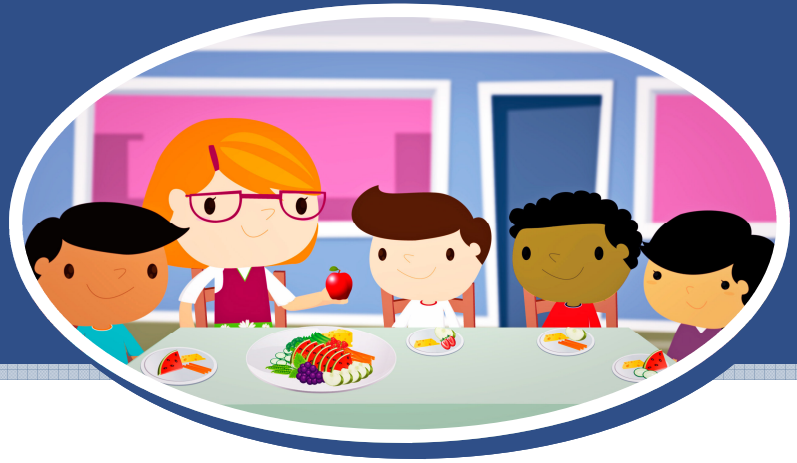


## Pack a Safe Lunch



Packing a safe lunch is just as important as packing a healthy lunch. Young children are at higher risk for foodborne illness (food poisoning) than healthy adults and can become seriously ill when food is not handled safely. Symptoms of foodborne illness include fever, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Bacteria can grow rapidly at room temperature in certain types of foods such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, cooked foods, and cut fruits and vegetables. Be sure to pack these foods safely.

### Follow these tips for safe packed lunches:

- Scrub all parts of your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds
  - ◇ Rinse them under warm water.
  - ◇ Dry your hands with a clean cloth or paper towel before you handle food
- Use clean surfaces (e.g. counters, cutting boards) and kitchen equipment to prepare lunches
- Always wash fruits and vegetables
  - ◇ Wash before cutting, not after
  - ◇ Scrub fruit with a rind such as cantaloupe, pineapple, oranges and melon
- Always store cut produce in the refrigerator if prepared in advance
- Pack lunches in an insulated bag with an ice pack to keep cold food cold
- Try making lunches the night before and store in the refrigerator overnight so they leave home at a cold temperature.
  - ◇ check that your refrigerator is 4° C or colder



- Use an insulated container (e.g. Thermos™) to keep beverages cold, or to keep hot food hot
  - ◊ Chill the empty Thermos™ in the freezer before filling with cold liquids
  - ◊ Pre-heat a wide mouth Thermos™ with hot water before filling with hot food
- Wash lunch containers every night to prevent germs from growing
  - ◊ Clean them with baking soda once a week to get rid of odors
- Don't reuse plastic food storage bags – they can hold germs



## Did you know?

**Some higher risk foods are not recommended for toddlers under 24 months because they can get sick more easily.**

### Foods to avoid include:

- Deli meats and hot dogs (if you serve them, cook them thoroughly to reduce the risk)
- Soft cheeses like Camembert, Brie, goat cheese and feta
- Raw or undercooked sprouts (bean, alfalfa, etc.)
- Cantaloupe



## Ask your child care provider how packed lunches will be stored and handled

- Is there a refrigerator?  
Ideally lunches should be stored in the refrigerator.
- Do they have the ability to heat up leftovers?  
If a microwave will be used, pack food in microwave safe containers.
- What happens to perishable food or beverages my child doesn't eat?  
Open packages should be discarded and not sent home. Unopened packages may not be safe to eat depending on how they were stored.

### For more information:

Call HealthLink BC by dialing 8-1-1

Interior Health Website: [www.interiorhealth.ca/childcarefood](http://www.interiorhealth.ca/childcarefood)