



# Sack Lunch Safety

Follow these guidelines to help ensure that the sack lunch that you lovingly prepare for your child won't cause food-borne illness.

**Perishable foods should be kept at the proper temperature—before and after preparation.**

**below  
40°F**

**or**

**above  
140°F**

## TO KEEP FOOD COLD:

- Use a **well-insulated lunch bag** or box.
- Add **at least 2-4 icepacks**, ensuring that any items to be kept cool are in direct contact—or, better yet, surrounded by—at least one icepack.
- **Freeze perishable items**, such as meat-containing sandwiches the night before.  
*For tips on freezing sandwiches, read Val Hillers' "Pack a Safe Lunch" (see "Sources" below).*

## TO KEEP FOOD HOT:

- Place  **piping hot**  soups in a **thermos**.
- Ask your child and your child's teacher to leave the container closed until lunch time.

***SAFETY NOTE: Take proper precautions, depending on your child's age, to ensure that your child does not burn himself on hot foods. Use your best judgment when deciding whether or not it is appropriate to pack hot food for your child.***

## "SAFE" FOODS

These foods can be safely left at room temperature for 4-6 hours.

- nuts and peanut butter (***ONLY if they are allowed in your child's school***)
- bread, cookies, crackers, and cake
- jam, honey, and syrup
- butter, margarine, and cooking oil
- dry cereals
- powdered milk (until reconstituted)
- raw, cooked, or dry fruit
- raw vegetables
- pickles, relishes, mustard, and ketchup
- dry or hard cheeses
- yogurt
- dried sausages, such as salami, pepperoni, and jerky
- Un-opened canned foods
- fruit pies

## "HANDLE WITH CARE" FOODS

These foods should be handled properly and stored at a safe temperature.

- raw or cooked meat, fish, and poultry
- sandwiches and salads which contain meat, fish, or poultry
- cooked vegetables
- cooked cereals and legumes, such as rice and beans
- custards and puddings
- milk and milk products (except hard cheeses and yogurt)
- shellfish
- dressings and gravies
- processed meats (bologna, hot dogs, etc.)

*Lists excerpted from Hillers, Val, "Pack a Safe Lunch," <<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb1490/eb1490.html>>, accessed on September 9, 2011.*

## Sources:

Hillers, Val, "Pack a Safe Lunch," <<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb1490/eb1490.html>>, accessed on September 9, 2011.

"Keeping 'Bag' Lunches Safe," <[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/Keeping\\_Bag\\_Lunches\\_Safe/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/Keeping_Bag_Lunches_Safe/index.asp)>, accessed on September 9, 2011