

Safe Brown Bag Lunches

Use good sanitation and good personal hygiene when preparing food.

Use special care with high protein, moist, and low-acid foods.

- Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, and fresh milk products.
- Dishes that contain these foods such as custard or meat pies.

Keep foods either hot or cold. Do not leave food at room temperature for more than 2 hours (1 hour on very hot days).

- Boil foods such as soups, stews and chili, then immediately pour into a hot, sterile vacuum bottle. Sterilize vacuum bottle with boiling water.
- Use a freezer gel-pack or make one from a plastic container (such as a margarine tub) filled with water then frozen. Place these containers in the lunch bag or box. Insulated lunch bags keep foods colder than paper bags.
- To keep beverages cold and safe, place empty a sterilized vacuum bottle in the freezer compartment every evening.
- Freeze individual cartons of yogurt or containers (not glass) of fruit or vegetable juices (these will serve the same purpose as freezer-gel devices or homemade ice containers).
- Take sandwich fillings such as egg or tuna salad and slices of luncheon meats in a cold-keeping container to be spread on bread at lunch time.
- Don't let lunch sit in a warm place such as the car or in the sun.

Foods safe for lunch without keeping hot or cold:

- Canned meat or poultry products, opened and eaten immediately.
- Dried meats such as beef jerky.
- Crisp-cooked bacon.
- Peanut butter.
- Hard cheeses such as cheddar, Swiss, or American.
- Clean, well-scrubbed fruits and vegetables.
- Breads, crackers, cereals.
- Baked products such as cookies and cake.

Use your imagination to create safe, nutritious and tasty lunches.

- Mix peanut butter and:
 - applesauce with a dash of cinnamon; wheat germ and raisins can also added.
 - crushed pineapple and shredded carrots.
 - nonfat dry milk powder and honey or mashed banana.
 - dried fruits like raisins, apricots, dates, or prunes.
 - apple, orange, or banana chunks.
 - sesame, pumpkin, or sunflower seeds.
 - honey and crumbled bacon.
- Mix a grated or chopped mild cheese with a favorite salad dressing such as French or Italian, then stir in:
 - sweet or dill pickles.
 - chopped nuts.
 - chopped onion, green pepper, cucumbers, celery, or bean sprouts.
 - crushed, drained pineapple.
 - chopped fruit such as apples or bananas.
- Use different types of breads.
 - Try whole wheat, rye, raisin, French, or Italian bread.
 - Fill pocket or pita bread with any of the above spreads.
 - Use hot dog, hamburger, or kaiser rolls.
 - Bagels, croissants, and English muffins make a nice change.
 - Spread quick breads such as banana or zucchini bread with peanut butter.