



Guidelines for safely bringing food into our facility.

This is a friendly reminder for resident family members and visitors about the importance of safe food handling practices when bringing in food for their loved ones. As most residents are elderly, they have weaker immune systems and take longer to recover from food that may be contaminated with a food borne illness or virus.

For this reason, (insert name here) community has devised a policy in regards to the safety of food brought in by family members or friends as a strategy to help minimize the risk of foodborne illness incidences.

On admission, family members are educated about policy guidelines to ensure they are aware of the risks, and how to safely provide food for a loved one.

Facility guidelines and visitor education focuses on the following food safety strategies and risks for foods brought into the community:

- Food that are of higher risk of containing Listeria should be limited, including: foods made with raw egg such as home-made egg mayonnaise, hollandaise sauce, uncooked cakes and desserts and egg-nog.
- Use good hand washing and hygiene during the preparation of foods.
- Label foods with the date they were prepared and the resident's name.
- Defrosting of chilled/frozen foods should be done in the refrigerator and left there until brought into the facility. Food should never be left at room temperature.
- When transporting, Food should be protected from contamination. Food should be kept at 41 F or cooler or hot food, at 141 F or hotter. Between 41 f and 141 F is known as the temperature danger zone (harmful bacteria multiply to dangerous levels in food when it is kept between these temperatures).
- Cold food should be carried in a cooler with ice packs when traveling. It must be emphasized that coolers can't cool food, they can only keep cold food cool. Food should be chilled in the fridge first.
- Hot food is difficult to keep hot and is best avoided if visitors are traveling long distances, it is better to chill the food overnight and reheat it at the residence.
- Food needs to be reheated to a minimum of 165 F for two minutes to kill any bacteria or viruses that might be present in the food.
- If foods are to be reheated in a microwave, ensure that the food is heated evenly. Food heated in a microwave oven does not heat uniformly and unwanted germs may survive in portions of poorly heated food. Manufacturers recommend standing times to help alleviate the problem of uneven heating. How evenly the food will heat will also depend on the thickness of portions and on the composition and moisture content of the food.
- If some or all of any perishable food is not eaten immediately, family members are to inform staff and store the food in a refrigerator with proper date and label of resident name. Uneaten food will be discarded within 7 days of the date of preparation.
- Some residents may like to keep extra food in their rooms in drawers or bedside tables for eating later. This is safe for shelf stable foods like cookies and chocolates yet can be very risky with perishable food such as cold meats, seafood, custard or cream filled cakes, salads, cooked vegetables and meat dishes. Be aware some residents may also forget how long the food has been there. Please take in consideration the foods you are bringing into the community for your loved ones.