

Food Safety Advice for Packed Meals

Packing meals to schools and workplaces is a common practice for us to enjoy homemade dishes conveniently. However, these meals may be stored or transported at unsafe temperatures for some time before consumption, making them susceptible to contamination and harmful bacterial growth. If these meals are not stored properly, disease-causing bacteria can multiply to dangerous levels or produce toxins, leading to food poisoning.

However, certain venues such as schools may not have access to refrigeration or reheating devices. Therefore, it is important to implement appropriate measures based on the setting where the meal is consumed to ensure food safety.

Adhere to the “Five Keys to Food Safety” in the course of meal preparation and during transportation. When preparing food, cook food thoroughly with core temperatures reaching at least 75°C. If chilling is required, cool cooked food promptly, pack it in a clean, insulated container and store it in the refrigerator at 4°C or below within 2 hours. If only part of a pre-cooked meal (e.g., dinner at a night before) is used for packing, it is preferable to transfer and cool that portion of food in a separate container before the meal to avoid contamination on the table.

As for packing, transportation and storage, pack meals right before leaving home as far as possible. Keep packed meals at a safe temperature when commuting: for hot food such as cooked or reheated meals, they should be kept at or above 60°C in appropriate insulated containers. Cook or reheat food thoroughly with core temperatures reaching at least 75°C before packing it into an insulated container. For cold food such as chilled pre-cooked meals, ham sandwiches, salads and other cold perishable foods, they should be kept at or below 4°C in an insulated meal box or bag combined with at least two cold sources, such as frozen gel packs or a frozen gel pack along with a frozen boxed beverage or frozen bottle of water, to keep food cold and safe until mealtime. Place the cold sources on the top and bottom of the perishable food items inside the insulated bag. Put the cold food into a refrigerator if available at the venue upon arrival; otherwise, avoid packing cold perishable foods if cold holding before mealtime is not possible.

Once the food is exposed to room temperature for some time,

finish the food as soon as possible. Discard any food that has been left at room temperature for more than 4 hours, and do not refrigerate or consume it. If reheating is required, ensure that the food is thoroughly reheated until steaming hot. If a food thermometer is available, check the core temperature of the food to ensure that it has reached at least 75°C before consumption. Do not reheat the food more than once. If a microwave oven is used for reheating, stir the food about halfway through to facilitate even heat distribution. Cook frozen convenience meals as directed on the packaging. Maintain proper hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing) before eating. Discard any leftover food that has been in the meal box for too long and has not been kept at a safe temperature. Clean all reusable cutlery, utensils, containers and food bags with hot soapy water after the meal.



For details, please browse
https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/multimedia/multimedia_publications/Packing%20Meal_e.pdf

Food Safety Day 2025

Food Safety Day 2025, an annual signature publicity event organised by the CFS, is a major promotional project of the year. Cross-contamination is one of the major risks affecting food safety, and also relates to the key principles of the "Five Keys to Food Safety". Hence, the theme for Food Safety Day 2025 is the Prevention of Cross-contamination. Please stay tuned for various publicity and promotional activities (including information in videos and children's books) organised by the CFS.

Follow the Official WhatsApp Channel of the CFS

A Verified Blue Check badge has been added to the CFS' newly launched official WhatsApp channel. This certification shows that WhatsApp has confirmed the authenticity of CFS's channel. By subscribing to the channel, one can obtain timely updates on local food safety matters and food safety materials. These include links to educational videos, food alerts and various food safety related activities. The posts on the channel are enhanced with graphic illustrations and clear explanations to help the public grasp key food safety messages effectively.

To subscribe to our official WhatsApp channel (in Chinese only), one can scan the QR Code in the illustration below, press "Follow" and click the "bell".



Make Good Use of Nutrition Labels and Shopping Cards to Achieve Healthy Diets

There are a wide variety of prepackaged foods available in the market, but people may consume more than the recommended amounts of total fat, salt or sugars without being aware of the nutrition contents of the foods they are buying and eating. Reading nutrition labels can help consumers to check the nutrient contents, which can be found on the packaging. The CFS has designed Shopping Cards that inform consumers if a food is high or low in total fat, salt or sugars. For example, a food containing more than 20g of total fat per 100g is considered high in total fat. Consumers may compare nutrition labels between products and crosscheck with the Shopping Cards before purchase to have a balanced diet.

Tips for Choosing Healthier Food

Check out the fat, sugars and sodium (or salt) contents in nutrition labels and make a healthier choice of "3 Low".

	What is High? (Choose less)		What is Low? (Choose more)	
	Per 100 g (more than)	Per 100 mL (more than)	Per 100 g (not more than)	Per 100 mL (not more than)
Total fat	20 g		3 g	1.5 g
Sugars	15 g	7.5 g	5 g	
Sodium	600 mg	300 mg	120 mg	

01/20

Recruitment of Consumer Liaison Group Members

Thank you for your participation in the Consumer Liaison Group (CLG). It requires a joint effort from all stakeholders to ensure food safety. Your friends and family are also welcome to join the CLG. Please complete and return the attached membership form. It is also available for download from our website:

https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/committee/committee_clg_recruitment.html

For enquiries, please contact Mr AU YEUNG on 2381 6275. Please return the completed membership form to us by fax (2893 3547), email (clg@feh.d.gov.hk) or post (4/F, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department Nam Cheong Offices and Vehicle Depot, 87 Yen Chow Street West, Kowloon (Consumer Liaison Group)).

[cfs.gov.hk](https://www.cfs.gov.hk)



[cfs.hk](https://www.cfs.gov.hk)

