

# BRINGING FOOD TO FAMILY



## What You Need to Know

### Guidelines

Some home-made and store-bought treats and meals are safe to bring into a healthcare facility, but other foods present a risk and require care and attention. It is important that the food you bring in does not:

- Increase the risk of food poisoning.
- Conflict with special diet considerations (ex: allergies, diabetes).
- Increase the risk of a choking hazard (ex: swallowing difficulties).

### To understand whether the food you are bringing in is safe:

- Check with the charge nurse to see if your family member or friend has any allergies or special dietary needs.
- Check with a Nutrition and Food Services representative onsite to review proper preparation and storage. Please note that staff cannot handle food you bring in for you.

### Safe food practices

- Do not prepare food for other people if you are sick.
- Always wash your hands with soap and warm running water before and after preparing and serving food and sanitize all areas you prepare food on.
- Keep raw and unwashed fruits and vegetables away from cooked and ready-to-eat foods.
- Use new packaging or containers and clearly label food.
- Transport food as quickly as possible. Never leave food sitting in a warm vehicle.
- Keep cold food cold and hot foods hot. If you cannot keep foods hot, chill and reheat at the facility.
- Foods should be eaten within two hours of preparation.
- Do not share home-made treats with other residents or patients and take leftovers home with you.



### Foods must be safe

Some home-prepared and store-bought treats and meals are safe. Examples include:

- Cakes and squares without cream filling.
- Unopened containers of store-bought juice, yogurt or milk.
- Cookies, muffins, breads, fruit pies or tarts.
- Individual meals prepared in a restaurant or grocery store that day.

### Homemade foods need extra care

Some home-prepared foods can present a risk of food poisoning and require special care and attention. Examples include:

- Casseroles, gravies, cooked or creamed vegetables, eggs and foods containing eggs, homemade dressings, sauces and dips, macaroni or potato salads, and salads containing raw fruits and vegetables.
- Meat, poultry, fish and shellfish dishes, and sandwiches made with fillings like egg, meat, fish, seafood, poultry and cheese.
- Cream, meringue or pumpkin pies, and pastries with meat or cream fillings.

### Please avoid high-risk foods

Please do not bring high-risk foods into a hospital or healthcare facility. Examples include:

- Home-canned foods, leftovers and previously-heated foods.
- Raw sprouts, grapefruit, eggs, seafoods and shellfish.
- Ready-to-eat packaged cold meats, meat spreads or seafood platters.
- Unpasteurized milk, milk products or juices.

These products pose an increased risk of food poisoning and other harmful effects.

For more information visit  
[www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)