

Food Safety for my School

Nutrition and Food Standards for Saskatchewan schools

When foods are offered in schools, they need to meet food safety and nutrition standards. Having safe and nutritious food can help children learn well in school and can help support healthy growth and development.*

Food Safety in Schools

Meal and snack programs and other food services provided for students should follow safe food handling practices found in [The Food Safety Regulations](#) and the [Public Eating Establishment Standards](#). Safe food handling practices help to make sure that food offered to students is obtained, stored, prepared, cooked and served in a safe manner.



What is Food-borne Illness?

Food-borne illness or “food poisoning” occurs when you eat food that has been contaminated by bacteria or their toxins; other harmful organisms such as viruses or parasites; or chemicals (e.g., cleaning products). The food does not always look, taste, feel or smell bad but it can make people sick with symptoms which may include vomiting, nausea and diarrhea. It is important to handle food safely to ensure those eating the food do not get sick. Following these guidelines can help to reduce the chance of getting food-borne illness.

Food Sources

- Foods that have a high risk of causing food-borne illness (e.g., meat and dairy products) should come from an approved location such as a grocery store, food supplier, licensed restaurant or regulated food processor.
- Foods that do not have a high risk of causing food-borne illness (e.g., uncut fruit and vegetables, and baked goods such as bread and muffins) may come from local producers or by donation.
- The following foods should not be used in a school meal service program:
 - » home canned goods;
 - » raw or home pasteurized milk or milk products;
 - » farm slaughtered animals or poultry;
 - » home processed meat, poultry, fish or dairy products (e.g., cheese);

- » dented, rusted or bulging canned goods or foods past their 'expiry date';
- » left-over food from events such as banquets and parties.

Talk with your local public health inspector if you have any questions about whether a food or food source is acceptable.

Temperature Control

- Keep cold foods cold at 4°C (40°F) or lower.
- Thaw foods at 4°C (40°F) or lower (e.g., in the refrigerator).
- Use accurate thermometers to monitor refrigerator temperatures.

*For more information see [Nourishing Minds: Eat Well, Learn Well, Live Well](#) on the Government of Saskatchewan website.

- Cook food to safe internal temperatures as per Health Canada's [Safe Internal Cooking Temperatures Chart](#).
- Keep hot foods hot at 60°C (140°F) or higher. Use a food thermometer to make sure food reaches and stays at this temperature or higher.



Food Preparation Areas

- Kitchen counters and tables must be durable, easy to clean and in good condition.
- Hand washing sinks must have liquid soap and paper towels. Make sure they are easily accessible.
- Cloths for cleaning counters must be soaked in a sanitizing solution such as a chlorine (i.e., bleach) solution before each use. Chlorine solution = 5 mL (1 tsp) household bleach to 2.5 L (10 cups) of water.
- A detailed cleaning schedule should be developed to make sure food preparation areas and equipment are regularly cleaned before and after preparing food. The cleaning schedule should be posted.



Contamination

- Always keep raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood separate from cooked foods or foods that will be eaten raw like vegetables and fruit.
- Separate your cutting boards. Use one board for vegetables and fruit and another board for raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood.
- Place raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood in sealed containers or plastic bags. To keep raw juices from dripping on other food, store these items on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator.

- Store foods up off of the floor. Make sure that foods are not stored in the same area as cleaning products or other chemicals.

Dishwashing

- Dishes, equipment and utensils must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized using manual (i.e., three-compartment sink) or mechanical dishwashing methods.
- Sanitization may be accomplished by the use of hot water at or above 82°C (180°F) or sanitizing chemicals such as chlorine (bleach) at concentrations of at least 100 ppm (5 mL household bleach to 2.5 L of water).

Food Handlers

- At least one person who has successfully completed an approved food handling course should be present when food is being prepared and served. Safe food handling courses are available through the [Public Health Inspection Offices](#) of the Saskatchewan Health Authority and some private companies.
- Once you have completed and passed an approved food handling course, you are encouraged to recertify every five years.
- Those who handle food must wash their hands with soap and water frequently.
- Hands must be washed before putting on disposable gloves. Gloves need to be changed as soon as they become dirty, torn, or if there is a change in task. Hands should be washed when changing gloves.
- Food handlers must wear hair restraints such as hair nets, and clean outer clothing when working.
- People must not prepare or serve food if they are sick.

Kitchen Facility

- Before construction, renovation and operation of a school kitchen, contact a local Public Health Inspector to review your plans.

Concerns regarding suspected contaminated food or food-borne illness should be directed to a local [Public Health Inspector](#).

For advice about compliance with [The Food Safety Regulations](#), or for more information on safe food handling and the [Public Eating Establishment Standards](#), contact your local [Public Health Inspector](#).