

BACK TO SCHOOL FOOD SAFETY

01. KEEP COLD FOODS COLD

Use at least two cold sources, such as gel packs, frozen water bottles, or frozen juice boxes. Place them on top and bottom of perishable items like meat, poultry, and eggs. Keep cold foods at or below 40°F (4°C) to keep them safe!

02. KEEP HOT FOODS HOT

For hot foods like soup or chili, use an insulated container. Fill it with boiling water and let it sit for a few minutes before adding food. Dump out the water, add the hot food, and keep the lid closed until lunchtime. Hot foods should stay at 140 degrees F or higher.

03. CHOOSE THE RIGHT LUNCHBOX

Use an insulated lunchbox. Paper bags are not a safe choice because they tear and leak as cold items thaw, which allows cold air to escape.

04. FOLLOW THE FOUR STEPS TO FOOD SAFETY

Clean: Wash hands with soapy water for at least 20 seconds before, during, and after handling food. Clean and sanitize lunchboxes regularly.

Separate: Keep raw meat and poultry separate from fruits, vegetables, and other ready-to-eat foods. Discard any containers or bags that held raw items.

Cook: Use a food thermometer to make sure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature.

Chill: Use two cold sources to keep perishable foods below 40 degrees F. Discard leftovers if they enter the Danger Zone (between 40 and 140 degrees F) for more than two hours.



YES

For more information about food safety, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) or email MPHonline@usda.gov.

