

SCHOOL

Food Safety

Public Health can support schools to ensure foods are prepared and/or served safely.

Foodborne illnesses can be prevented through safe food handling practices. The following will help illustrate best practices and how to reduce risks.



CATERED FOOD

- Visit [Check Before You Choose](#) when selecting a restaurant or caterer that will provide food for activities or events, like a pizza or sub lunch.
- Ensure food comes from inspected suppliers, not private kitchens. Food from uninspected kitchens carries a higher risk of foodborne illnesses due to unknown sanitization and temperature practices, contamination risks (e.g., cooking practices, pets) and potential allergens.
- Food should be delivered close to the time of service. It should arrive hot or cold, not at room temperature. If delivered early, food should be stored at the appropriate temperature until served.
- Public Health does not need to be notified when using inspected suppliers.



SCHOOL & CLASSROOM- PREPARED FOOD

- Classroom activities involving food can happen safely with access to a kitchen that is properly equipped with a clean sink for food preparation and dishwashing and another sink (e.g., kitchen or bathroom) for handwashing.
- Choose prewashed and cut greens, fruits and vegetables, as well as pre-cooked meats.
- Choose low-risk foods such as packaged snacks and whole fruit.
- Preparing raw meat and poultry is not recommended unless it is part of a high school hospitality or family studies course.
- Consider hiring a caterer or using premade foods if the school kitchen is not properly equipped.



SCHOOL FOOD EVENTS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- Follow [Public Health's special event approval process](#). Public Health can work closely with school event organizers to help create a safe and healthy event.
- Ensure food comes from inspected suppliers, not private kitchens.
- For food truck events, visit [Check Before You Choose](#) to ensure that the food truck has been inspected.
- For BBQ events, use precooked meat products to minimize the risk of foodborne illness.



TIPS FOR ALL SCHOOL FOOD EVENTS

- Ensure all food handlers wash their hands, use clean utensils and serve food on disposable plates or napkins to avoid hand contact with foods.
- Food should be stored at the appropriate temperature until served. For example, ensure cold food is stored at 4°C or less. A cooler with ice packs may be used if a refrigerator is not available.
- Be aware of allergies and food sensitives and of the products and ingredients that are not allowed in school.