

QUICK FACTS: SAFE SCHOOL LUNCHES FOR KIDS

Packing a **safe** lunch is just as important as packing one that is **healthy** and **delicious**.

Children represent half of all hospitalizations for foodborne illness in the United States each year, and may be less aware of what food should look, smell or taste like. Use the tips below to teach your child about food safety, and make sure your family is engaging in best practices to minimize risk.

✓ Teach Kids Food Safety Basics

Teach handwashing from an early age. Use warm soapy water to scrub before eating or touching food. Singing the ABCs is just about the right amount of time (20-30 seconds).

Plates, please! Always serve food onto a clean plate or napkin.

Avoid the “5 Second Rule.” Contrary to popular belief, food that touches the floor (where people and pets put their feet!) needs to be thrown away, not put in your mouth.

Familiarize children with what rotten, moldy, or wilted fruits and veggies look like. If produce is discolored, wrinkly, or squishy it should be thrown away.

Teach children the difference between raw and cooked meat. Hamburger or chicken that is pink and cold or frozen is unsafe and needs further cooking.

Speak up. Make sure your children know that if food or water looks yucky it's okay to say something. Cafeteria workers not wearing gloves or hairnets, dirty water in the drinking fountain, or bugs or rodents at school or in a restaurant are potential health hazards, and should be reported to a trusted adult ASAP.

✓ Remember the Three “T’s” of Lunch Safety

Food **Type** | Food **Temperature** | Food **Timing**

Many foods (crackers, peanut butter, granola, and trail mix) are safe at room temperature. However, be sure that cold foods are kept cold (cold cuts, yogurt, eggs) and hot foods kept hot (soups) until lunch or snack time. Put reusable icepacks in insulated lunchboxes to ensure sandwiches with deli meat and cheese stay below 40°F until they are ready to be eaten.

Foods left out at room temperature for 2 hours or more can be a breeding ground for harmful bacteria like *E. coli* and *Salmonella*.

✓ Educate Yourself

The USDA's FREE [Food-Safe Schools Action Guide](#)* is a great place to start. It's an excellent resource for families, parents and the larger school community. This guide brings together specific aspects of food safety that need to be considered when serving food in schools and how to take action for change.

 **Stop
Foodborne
Illness**
stopfoodborneillness.org

Awful Creative

*www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Food-Safe-Schools-Action-Guide.pdf



QUICK FACTS: PETS ARE LIKE FAMILY TOO

Just like us, pets are at risk of food poisoning.

Statistically speaking, we don't have an accurate idea as to how many pets get sick from contaminated pet food each year. However, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has estimated that of the approximately 70M dogs and 74M cats in the US, 11M+ dogs and 12M+ cats get sick every year from a food-related illness.

If you're a pet owner, you probably treat your furry friend like a family member. Here are some good ideas to help you keep your pet from facing a foodborne illness.

Minimizing Risk:

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before and after touching pet food.
- Clean food and water dishes after each feeding.
- Use a clean scoop to transfer food out of bags and containers to dishes.
- Throw away spoiled or old pet food. Tie the plastic bag so it's more difficult to get into.

Staying Informed:

- Sign up to receive pet food recall emails from the AVMA here: <http://bit.ly/petfoodrecalls>
- If your pet's food is recalled, take quick action to discard all of it, from your supply and from your pet's food bowls.
- If your pet is already sick, you may want to keep some of the tainted food for possible testing later. Handle it with care by washing your hands before and after, and by clearly labeling what it is. Discard the rest.
- Report a pet food complaint to the FDA here: <https://www.safetyreporting.hhs.gov/> Have as much information on hand as possible.

Symptoms to Watch For

When a dog or cat (or other pet) falls ill with a foodborne illness, they usually have these symptoms:

- Diarrhea (including blood or mucus)
- Vomiting
- Lethargy
- Dehydration

Sometimes, though, pets are carriers without showing symptoms. They shed the pathogen in their stools or harbor it in their saliva or on their fur. That's why it's important to remember that you and your family, especially children, can become sick from tainted pet food, too. Humans are at risk when they handle contaminated pet food or have contact with an infected animal.

Protecting Yourself

The best protection is diligent, thorough hand washing after petting and touching pets, serving or handling pet food, or any contact with pet waste. Because children 5 and under are especially susceptible to foodborne illness, they should be kept away from feeding areas at all times. And, don't let them touch or eat pet food.

See **Quick Facts: Wash Your Hands**

For symptoms of foodborne illness in humans:

www.stopfoodborneillness.org/awareness/to-do-if-youre-sick/

If Your Pet is Sick

If you suspect you have food poisoning, seek immediate medical attention.

If your cat or dog is showing symptoms of a foodborne illness, call your vet right away for immediate examination and treatment.

