

Keeping food from home safe at childcare

Parents and childcare programs both play an important role in preventing foodborne illness when dealing with foods brought from home.

Scenario #1 Childcare facility is not storing food in fridge or reheating food provided from home	Advise parents to: - Follow safe food recommendations: Food Safety: Storing, Food Safety: Preparing, Food Safety: Cooking, Keeping School Lunches Safe - Use ice packs, insulated thermoses, or insulated lunch bags to maintain perishable food temperatures - Reheat hot food to 74°C (165°F) before packing; keep at 60°C or hotter - Preheat food grade thermos with boiling water for 5-10 minutes before adding hot food - Provide food in food grade containers with child's name - Be allergy aware	The childcare program must: - Follow all food permit restrictions as indicated on the facility food permit. - Follow safe food handling practices before assisting with feeding, including handwashing - Send all food and dishes home daily
Scenario #2 Childcare facility is storing food in fridge and/or reheating food provided from home	Advise parents to: - Follow safe food recommendations: Food Safety: Storing, Food Safety: Preparing, Food Safety: Cooking, - Provide food in food grade containers with child's name - Be allergy aware - Follow recommendations of scenario #1 to keep food cold if the facility is NOT storing food in fridge - Follow recommendations of scenario #1 to keep food hot if the facility is NOT reheating food	In addition to the requirements in scenario #1, the childcare program must: - Keep perishable food at 4°C or colder or 60°C or hotter - Store food from home separate from program food - Reheat food to 74°C (165°F) and verify with a calibrated thermometer
Scenario #3 Childcare facility is re-plating food provided from home.	Advise parents: - Follow safe food recommendations: Food Safety: Storing, Food Safety: Preparing, Food Safety: Cooking, - Provide food in food grade containers with child's name - Be allergy aware - Follow recommendations of scenario #1 to keep food cold if the facility is NOT storing food in fridge - Follow recommendations of scenario #1 to keep food hot if the facility is NOT reheating food	In addition to the requirements in scenario #1&2, the childcare program must: Wash and sanitize all reusable dishes in a 3-compartment sink or commercial sanitizer

Contact us at 1-833-476-4743 or [submit a request online](#) at ahs.ca/eph.

Updated July 2026

©2026 Alberta Health Services, Safe Healthy Environments

PUB-1126-202607