

GUIDANCE FOR BRINGING FOOD INTO THE HOSPITAL

Bringing Food into the Hospital

Food that is mishandled can cause serious consequences for all, especially for “at-risk” groups—infants, young children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems. It is important that volunteers and family be especially careful when preparing, transporting and serving food to residents to help prevent or reduce the risk of infection, food poisoning, food borne illnesses and unwanted interaction with prescribed medication.

- Any food brought in should be suitable for the dietary needs and any dietary restrictions of the client(s).
- On arrival at the unit all food items for clients should be declared to staff to ensure that the food is suitable for the client(s):
 - When bringing in food you should be able to relay to staff whether or not the prepared foods contain, nuts, eggs, dairy, wheat, fish, etc. so staff can ensure that any clients with known allergies can avoid foods that could cause allergic reactions.
- Food that has been sealed by the manufacturer using heat seals, tamperproof lids and bottle tops are preferred. All packaged items brought in should be within their “use by” “best by” or “expired” date range.
- Alcohol and energy drinks, raw meats, uncooked eggs, and grapefruit products are prohibited.

General Preparation and Transporting Guidelines:

- Refrigerate or freeze perishable food within 2 hours of shopping or preparing; 1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F.
- **Keep hot food HOT.** Keep hot food at or above 140°F. Wrap well and place in an insulated container. Food must be hot and steamy for serving. Just “warmed up” is not good enough. We do not have reheating or cooking capabilities on our units.
- **Keep cold food COLD.** Place cold food in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs. Cold food should be stored at **40°F or below** to prevent bacterial growth. Meat, poultry, and seafood may be packed while frozen so that they stay colder longer.
- **Organize cooler contents.** Consider packing beverages in one cooler and perishable food in another.
- **Keep coolers closed.** Once on site, limit the number of times the cooler is opened as much as you can. This helps to keep the contents cold longer.

- **Clean your produce.** Rinse **fresh fruits and vegetables** under running tap water before packing them in the cooler, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Rub **firm-skinned fruits and vegetables** under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water. Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean cloth towel or paper towel. **Note:** Packaged fruits and vegetables that are labeled "ready-to-eat," "washed," or "triple washed" need not be washed.

<p align="center">Recommended Foods (can be brought in without restriction)</p>	<p align="center">Foods requiring appropriate food handling (these foods may support the growth of pathogenic bacteria)</p>
<p>Wrapped fresh fruit and fruit products</p>	<p>Cooked meat and poultry, fresh meat products e.g. gravy, soups and stock</p>
<p>Packaged dried fruits</p>	<p>Fresh or artificial cream products e.g. yogurts, mousse, cakes and ice cream</p>
<p>Pre-packaged breads, muffins, cookies, scones, etc.</p>	<p>Sandwiches (all fillings)</p>
<p>Packaged nuts and seeds (provided the client does not have any related allergies)</p>	<p>Commercially prepared ice cream (only if frozen solid at service time)</p>
<p>Pre-packaged biscuits, crackers and cakes (no cream or custard filling or cream cheese icing)</p>	<p>Fast food e.g. burgers, pizza, Chinese/Mexican takeout, etc.</p>
<p>Pre-wrapped chocolate or candy</p>	<p>Milkshakes</p>
<p>Packaged chips, popcorn, pretzels</p>	<p>Any other food item which requires refrigeration or heating, e.g. pies, pastries, sausage rolls, cheese, cooked eggs, casseroles, etc.</p>
<p>Bottled drinks and bottled decaf tea/coffee (plastic only)</p>	
<p>Pasteurized, sealed, bottles of fruit juice or smoothies</p>	
<p>Commercially prepared jams, jellies, marmalade, honey, (in small plastic jars or single serving containers)</p>	