

Cool it!

Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) should not be in the “Danger Zone” for more than 2 hours (or more than 1 hour outdoors during the hot summer heat). If you are unable to control the temperature of PHF, eat them within 2 hours or throw them away. If foods have been properly hot and cold held, it is safe to chill them and store as leftovers.

It is important to cool foods quickly!

- ☞ Get hot food in the refrigerator within 2 hours.
- ☞ Allow for air circulation – don’t pack the refrigerator too tightly
- ☞ Keep the lid off until the food is cold – lids act like a “blanket” and keep the food warm longer.
- ☞ Keep the uncovered container on the top shelf (cover the container when the food is cold).
- ☞ Don’t fill the containers too full (no more than 2 inches deep for thick foods like stew or beans).

Food Storage Guidelines

Short, but safer, times to keep your foods fresh.

| | Refrigerator | Freezer |
|------------------|--------------|---------|
| Cooked meats | 3-4 days | 3-6 mos |
| Lunch Meats | 3-4 days | No |
| Raw meats | 2-3 days | 2-3 mos |
| Shell eggs | 4 weeks | Yuck! |
| Hard cooked eggs | 1 week | No |
| Milk | 5 days | 1 month |
| Cold salads | 3-5 days | No |



Remember – Foods are safest within the first 2 hours after they are cooked!

For potluck safety, prepare hot dishes right before the meal, rather than cooking and cooling in advance and then reheating at the potluck.

Potluck Checklist



Will I be able to keep my food hot or cold or be able to throw it away within 2 hours (including transport time)?

If no, bring non-PHF like crackers, chips, sliced vegetables or cookies. Avoid cream pies, meats, melons and potatoes or other starchy dishes.

Will I be able to transport foods safely?

Keep PHF out of the “Danger Zone” at all times –even during transport. Provide frozen or hot objects in an insulated cooler to keep your meal cold or hot.

Will handwashing be available?

No? Take foods that need to be eaten with a utensil or don’t need to be handled. (Still try to find a handsink!)

Are people going to touch my food?

Unless you provide a utensil at each potluck item, people will likely handle your food. Increased handling increases your odds of getting sick from a foodborne illness. Use a utensil or other “barrier” like napkins, wrappers or tissues.

Planning on potato salad?

Cold salads made from cooked ingredients (like potato, chicken, or pasta salads) require special care for food safety. It is safest to cook the ingredients and refrigerate them before you assemble the salad. To maximize food safety, make all cold salads with cold ingredients and keep them cold.



Gallatin City-County Health Dept
Environmental Health Services
215 W. Mendenhall, Rm 108
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 582-3120
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Food Safety Guidelines

Bacteria that cause foodborne illness like to crash potlucks and parties and they don’t usually leave their calling card until the party is over.

Although you can’t see, taste or smell them you can sure feel them when you get sick hours or days later.

Follow the storage, sanitation and cooking tips in this handout to keep these uninvited guests away from your next get-together.

This handout is designed for small group gatherings like office, church or social gatherings not servicing foods to the public. If you have more questions or want to serve food to the public, please contact us at:

Gallatin City-County Health Dept
215 W. Mendenhall, #108
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 582-3120.

Keep it Clean!

The # 1 cause of foodborne illness is germs from dirty hands. To reduce the odds of spreading illness, wash your hands.



- Before preparing or eating food
- After going to the bathroom
- After diapering a child
- After taking care of a pet
- After coughing, sneezing
- After smoking or any time your hands may have become contaminated

In order to properly wash your hands, you must use soap and hot running water. Scrub your hands with the soap for at least 20 seconds before you rinse, making sure to include all parts of your hands (even the backs!).



Feeling Ill?? Don't pass it on. Do not prepare foods for a potluck if anyone in your household has been sick with vomiting or diarrhea during the week.

Sanitize it!

Surfaces (like cutting boards and utensils) also have germs. Sanitizing reduces the number of germs to a safer level.

A recipe for a sanitizer is

1 teaspoon unscented bleach in 1 gallon of water.

Mix a fresh batch each time you cook.

- ☞ To sanitize counters-spray them with sanitizer solution and allow them to dry
- ☞ To sanitize utensil- after washing with hot soapy water, dip utensils in sanitizer for one (1) minute and allow to air dry.

Keep it separate!

Germs from raw meat can contaminate other foods.

Handle raw meat safely to prevent cross-contamination (spreading bacteria from meat to other foods).

While shopping, choose meats last to keep them cold, and bag them in plastic to keep their juices away from your other foods.

Meat juices might drip! Store raw meats and eggs below other foods in your refrigerator. If this is not possible, keep them in a water tight container.

Make sure to wash your hands and all surfaces and utensils that touch raw meat before you work with other foods.

Be sure to wash all fruits and vegetables under running water before you prepare them. Fruits and veggies need a good shower after playing in the dirt!

Leftovers

All leftovers, assuming they were properly held hot or cold, must be rapidly reheated to at least 165oF. This will help to eliminate any potential bacteria that may have grown in the foods during storage.



What are Potentially Hazardous Foods?

Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) create increased risk for foodborne illness because they can let disease-causing (pathogenic) bacteria grow. PHF are generally moist and have protein. Examples include:

Beef, poultry, pork, lamb, eggs, fish and shellfish
Sprouts and *cut* melons

Milk and dairy products
Cooked potatoes, beans, pasta & rice

You must control the temperatures of PHF to keep pathogenic bacteria from growing rapidly on your food. It is important to keep PHF out of the "Danger Zone" (avoid temperatures between 41°F-135°F)

Cook it!

Cooking meats to the proper temperature kills or destroys most of the parasites, bacteria and viruses that might be in the meat. Use a thermometer to check temperatures.

Minimal Internal Temperatures for safer cooking

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| Fish, Shellfish & Lamb | 145° |
| Beef – Whole cuts | 145° |
| Pork | 145° |
| Hamburger/Sausage | 155° |
| Poultry, Stuffed meats and casseroles | 165° |



Keep it Hot!

Once cooked, Potentially Hazardous Foods must be kept hot at 135°F or hotter to keep bacteria from growing.

Use crock pots, chafing dishes, or other ways to keep your food safe to serve to your guests.

If you cannot keep the food hot, it is safest to throw the food away after 2 hours – you can't usually see, smell, or taste the bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Be Safe, rather than sorry!