

CRITICAL INFORMATION ABOUT FOOD

Dear Parents,

Weather in UAE has started getting hotter day by day. So how can you avoid making yourself or your kids sick when packing school lunches in the heat?

The good news is that the bacteria that cause food to spoil are quite different to the bacteria that typically cause food poisoning, and generally don't make you sick.

But harmful bacteria that cause food poisoning can still end up in lunchboxes. Controlling the temperature of the food can help minimize the chance of getting sick, or the severity of any food-borne illness.

Food poisoning and spoiling

When left out in the heat, foods such as meat, cheese, fish and milk will spoil and start to smell because of bacteria such as *Pseudomonas*. But while it's certainly not a good idea for your child to nibble on spoiled foods and end up in gastrointestinal infection. The contaminated food can cause symptoms such as nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal cramps and chills as soon as 30 minutes after ingestion. The cause of a specific food poisoning case can be hard to determine. Often the contaminated food is completely consumed and mild cases of diarrhea can easily be caused by exposure to irritants such as gluten or lactose, as by a toxin, bacteria or virus. It's usually only when multiple people eating the same food get sick that the source is traced and investigated.

FOOD POISONING

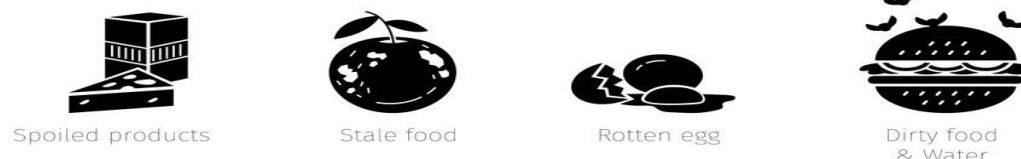
SYMPTOMS



PREVENTIONS

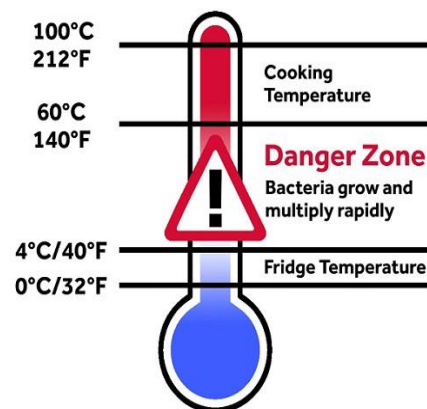


TRIGGERS



Bacteria flourish in the heat

As with almost any kind of infection, contact with disease-causing bacteria doesn't inevitably result in disease. We regularly handle a low level of bacterial contamination in the foods we eat without coming to harm. The number of bacteria in contaminated food is important: a person ingesting a higher number of virulent bacteria is more likely to fall ill than someone ingesting a much smaller amount. These bacteria flourish in a zone between 5 and 60 degrees Celsius – known as the temperature "danger zone" – where bacterial reproduction is most rapid.



In the summer heat, the doubling time of bacteria can be as short as 20 minutes. This means a thin slice of a well-washed tomato with 100 bacteria at 8am could contain just over 26 million bacteria by 2pm on the same day.

Storing foods outside the temperature danger zone can dramatically slow the rate at which bacteria can multiply. This is why cold food should be kept below 5 degrees Celsius and hot foods above 60 degrees.

What can you do?

There are four key steps to safely preparing food:

- 1) Wash your hands thoroughly before handling food. Use clean utensils and cutting boards
- 2) Use separate cutting boards for fresh produce and raw meat or poultry to reduce the risk of *Salmonella*
- 3) Cook food to the right temperature using a food thermometer
- 4) Chill perishable foods such as meats, eggs, cheese or yoghurt with at least two cold sources, such as freezer packs, to keep harmful bacteria from multiplying rapidly. Frozen juice poppers can also be used as freezer packs and by lunchtime should be thawed and ready to drink.

FOOD POISONING PREVENTIONS



WASHING FOOD



WASHING HANDS



TEMPERATURE TREATMENT



WATER PURIFICATION



DISCARD LEFTOVERS AND EXPIRED FOOD



COMPLIANCE WITH THE TEMPERATURE OF FOOD STORAGE

An insulated lunchbox should be used for packing perishable foods. Insulated containers such as thermos flasks can also be used to store hot soups and stews. When packing a child's lunch, the night before, store the food in the refrigerator overnight, so it stays colder for longer.

Finally, teach children to wash their hands with soapy water for 20 seconds before eating. Or pack disposable wipes so they can easily clean their hands before and after eating.

At **Piccadilly Nursery** we have Hand washing policy which we follow rigorously and try to keep all surfaces sanitized as well before and after meal breaks.



Getting sick

Despite parents' best efforts, food poisoning can occur. When it does, oral rehydration is the cornerstone of treatment. You can buy a rehydrating solution of sugar, salt and water from most pharmacists. Or make your own by adding half a level teaspoon of salt and six level teaspoons of sugar dissolved in one liter of clean drinking or boiled water.

A bland diet for a short period of time can be helpful in recovery.

For severe symptoms or for any concerns about your child's recovery, see your GP.

In order to avoid any food contamination, we request parents not to send any food which can turn bad due to hot weather

Piccadilly Nursery