

Back-to-School FOOD SAFETY TIPS

Chances are you worry more about whether your children will eat the food in their lunch boxes than about whether that food will be safe to eat. But children are the most vulnerable to food poisoning, so it makes sense to take extra precautions when preparing the lunches they take to school.

1 IN 6 Approximate number of Americans stricken with food poisoning each year

128,000

Estimated annual hospitalizations from foodborne illnesses

42,000

Estimated annual reports of salmonella infections, the most frequent cause of foodborne illnesses

Of the estimated 42,000 annual salmonella infections, almost

50%

of those are infants and school-age children.

Because many milder cases are not diagnosed or reported, the actual number of salmonella infections may be 29 or more times greater. That's more than

1.2 MILLION

estimated cases annually.

Tips to keep your kids healthy

CLEAN

If you're making lunch the night before, be sure to wash your hands and use clean cutting boards, utensils and countertops. Making lunch on the same surfaces you used to prepare raw meat or poultry for dinner may result in cross-contamination and lead to salmonella-related illness.

SEPARATE

Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for meat and poultry.

COOK

Cook foods to the right temperature using a food thermometer.

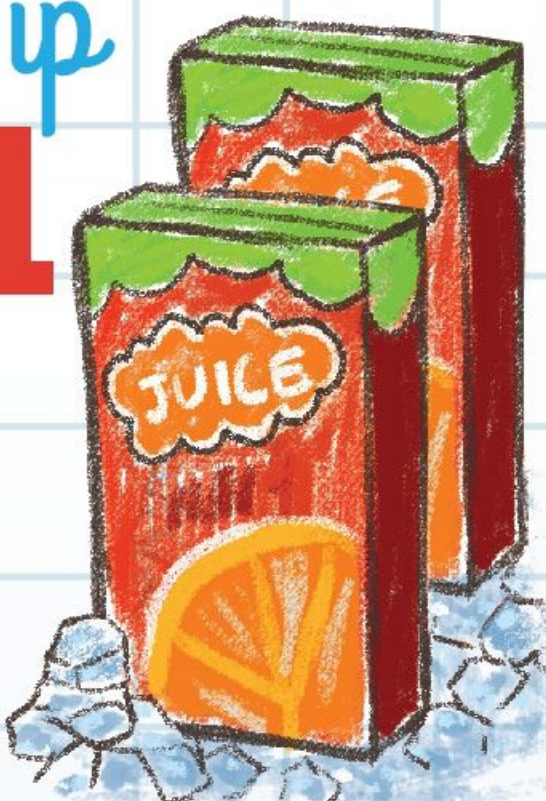
CHILL

If the lunch contains perishable food items like luncheon meats, eggs, and yogurt, make sure to pack it with at least two cold sources (e.g., freezer packs and frozen water bottles).

Pack a Safe Lunch

Send your kids back to school with safe and satisfying lunches by following these simple tips:

Tip 1



Frozen juice boxes can also be used as freezer packs. By lunchtime, the juice should be thawed and ready to drink!

Tip 2



Perishable food can be unsafe to eat by lunchtime if packed in a paper bag. Use an insulated box or bag instead.

Tip 3



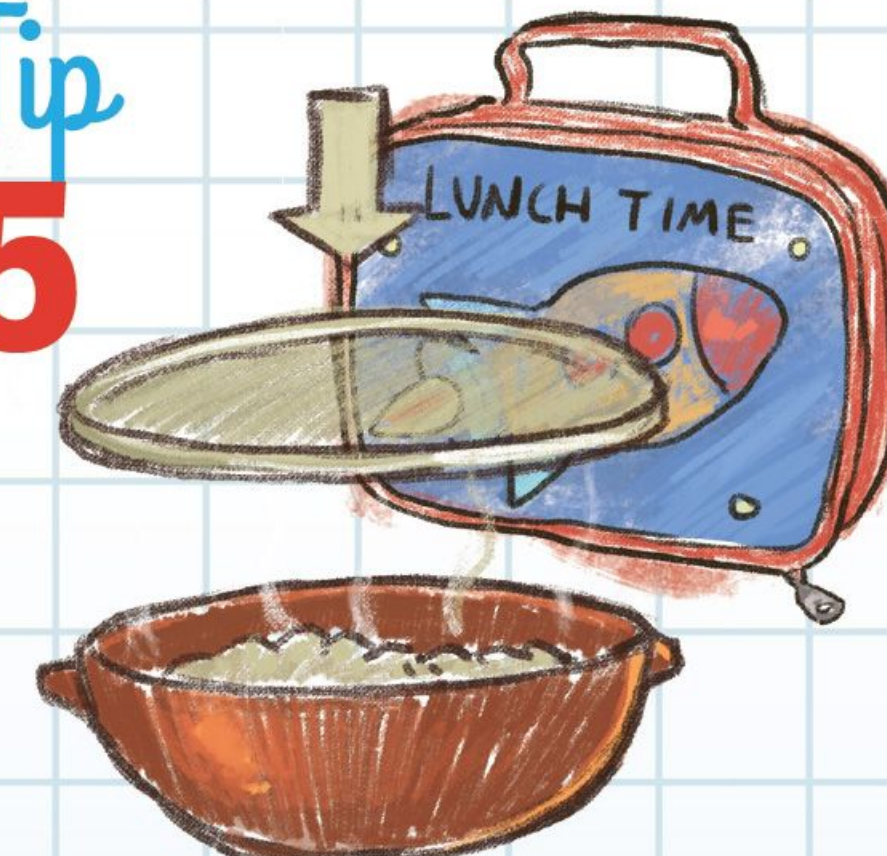
Children should wash their hands for 20 seconds with warm soapy water before eating. Have them sing the ABCs twice while washing if they sometimes finish early.

Tip 4



If possible, your child's lunch should be stored in a refrigerator. But leave the lid of the lunchbox or an insulated, soft-sided bag open in the fridge so that cold air can circulate and keep the food cold.

Tip 5



If you're packing a hot lunch, like soup, chili or stew, use an insulated container to keep it hot. Fill the container with boiling water, let stand for a few minutes, empty, and then put in the piping hot food. Tell your child to keep the insulated container closed until lunchtime to keep the food hot — 140°F or above.

Tip 6



After lunch, discard all leftover food, used food packaging, and paper bags. Do not reuse packaging because it could contaminate other food.