



Food Safety and Potlucks

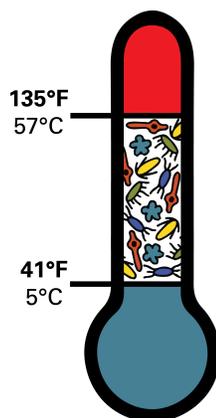
Sharing food is an important part of every culture, and it is common for people to bring various foods to share at gatherings. However, if food is not handled appropriately it can lead to foodborne illness. Consider these tips to keep food safe when sharing with family and friends.

Temperature Danger Zone

Harmful bacteria grow fastest between 41°F and 135°F, particularly room temperatures. Minimizing time in this range, called the temperature danger zone, reduces growth of these harmful bacteria. Foods that can support the growth of harmful bacteria should not be left in this temperature range for more than 4 hours.

Examples: cooked vegetables, pasta and rice; cooked and raw meat, poultry and fish; cut melons, tomatoes and leafy greens.

Temperature Danger Zone



Food Safety Tips for Potluck Gatherings

Preventing Cross-Contamination

- Wash hands properly before handling or eating food
- Use a single use utensil or place food in an individual cup/container to taste test before serving
- Avoid eating from plate while in the buffet line
- Use utensils, napkins, toothpicks or paper to pick up foods instead of bare hands
- Use a clean plate each time you pass through the serving line

Hot and Cold Holding

- Hold hot foods at 135°F or higher by using chafing dishes, warming trays or slow cookers
- Hold cold at 41°F or lower by placing cold food containers in larger containers filled with ice

Handling Leftovers

- Throw away or compost any perishable food left at room temperature for more than 4 hours
- Refrigerate perishable leftovers as soon as the meal is over
- Place foods like soups, stews or dips in shallow containers before refrigerating as they allow for quicker cooling
- Eat leftovers within 7 days

Dealing with Allergens

- Label foods containing allergens such as milk, eggs, tree nuts, shellfish and mollusks, fish, soy, peanuts and wheat
- Provide serving utensils for each dish as using the same utensil for different foods could result in allergen cross-contact
- For example, a utensil used to serve breakfast casserole and then used to serve hash brown potatoes would introduce an egg allergen to the potatoes