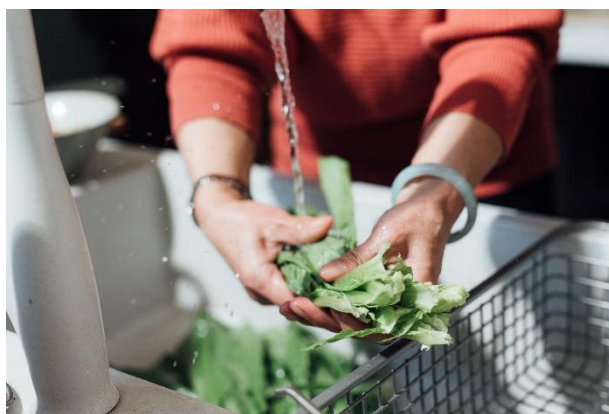


Packing A Safe Lunch

Parents and caregivers have the opportunity to provide delicious and nutritious meals for their preschoolers. It is important to keep **hot foods hot** and **cold foods cold** throughout the day until they are consumed.

The Danger Zone

Dangerous bacteria that can make us sick thrive in what is called the "Danger Zone." The Danger Zone is where food is between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Perishable food must be kept at a safe temperature until it is ready to be consumed.



Tips for Creating a Safe Lunch

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds in warm, soapy water before and after preparing food.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water.
- Ensure that reusable lunch bags are clean before use.
- Don't cross-contaminate! Use separate cutting boards for produce, meat, and poultry.
- Keep it cool! Use an insulated lunch tote and at least two sources of cold, such as a small frozen gel pack or frozen juice box to keep the food inside cold until lunchtime.
- You can save time by preparing perishable items the night before and storing them in the refrigerator.
- Keep **hot foods hot** by using an insulated container. Fill the container with boiling water and empty it after a few minutes. Keep the container closed to retain heat.

An EEO/AA Institution: Extension is a unit of the University of Nevada, Reno's College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources engaged in Nevada communities, presenting research-based knowledge to address critical community needs. It is a county-state-federal partnership providing practical education to people, businesses and communities.

References

Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (2025, July 25). *Keeping "Bag" Lunches Safe*.

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/keeping-bag-lunches-safe>

Partnership for Food Safety Education (n.d.). BAC to School: Pack a Safe Lunch 101. <https://fightbac.org/kidsfoodsafety/school-lunches/>

Partnership for Food Safety Education (n.d.). School Lunch Food Safety Tips for Parents. <https://fightbac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/School-Lunch-Food-Safety-Tips-Flyer.pdf>