

# Guidelines for bringing food to hospital



## ***Food Safety is our priority***

Illness and injury place extra demands on your body. If you eat well in hospital you are more likely to recover quickly and go home sooner. Canberra Health Services aims to provide a well-balanced menu for you to choose from while you are in hospital. The menu has been planned to give you a range of foods to help satisfy your appetite and promote nutrition and health. **We do not encourage your family or friends to bring in food for you.** The hospital cannot accept responsibility for storing, heating or serving any food not prepared by our caterers as it may not meet the required food standards code. If your family or friends do bring food into hospital for you, there are important guidelines to follow to make sure it is safe and suitable. Please follow these simple guidelines.

## ***Speak to your nurse***

You may have special dietary requirements or restrictions while you are in hospital. It is important that your family or friends check with your nurse before giving you food or drinks. You may also have special recommendations to follow from your dietitian or speech pathologist.

**Important: Please do not offer or share food with other patients. They may have special dietary requirements or restrictions.**

## ***When you have swallowing difficulties***

You may have swallowing difficulties when you are in hospital. Your swallowing may be checked by a speech pathologist who may recommend you have a texture modified diet or drink thickened fluids. If this happens, it is important that your family or friends check with your speech pathologist or nurse before bringing any food or drinks from home or giving you anything to eat or drink.

## ***Know the higher risk foods***

Foods with a high risk of making you sick are those that are moist, making it easy for bacteria to grow. If these foods are left out of the refrigerator for periods of time, they may spoil and cause food poisoning. Some people with lowered immunity are at higher risk of food poisoning. It is best to avoid high risk foods. Examples of high-risk foods include (but are not limited to):

- *cooked meat including beef, pork, chicken and seafood*
- *raw meat including beef, pork, chicken and seafood*
- *processed meats like ham, salami and pate*
- *milk and milk products including flavoured milk, cheese, yoghurt and cream*
- *cooked rice and pasta dishes.*

## ***Preparing food***

It is important that food is prepared safely. The tips over the page will help your family and friends make sure food is safely prepared.

Above 60°C	Keep cooked food at 60°C or higher
5°C to 60°C Danger Zone	Make sure your food isn't in the temperature danger zone of 5°C to 60°C for more than 2 hours
Below 5°C	Keep cold food in the fridge at 5°C or lower

- Keep hot food steaming hot (60°C or above).
- Food between 5°C and 60°C is in the danger zone and must be eaten or thrown away within 2 hours.
- Keep cold food refrigerated (between 0°C and 5°C).
- Wash your hands well with soap and water and dry them thoroughly before touching food.
- Separate raw and cooked/ready to eat food.
- While cooking, make sure utensils and the kitchen space is kept clean.
- If you are sick don't prepare food for patients.

To reduce the risk of food poisoning, your family and friends should store the food they bring into the hospital

correctly. For everyone's safety, specific types of containers can't be used in some areas of the hospital. Please check this with your nurse.

Please note, Canberra Health Services do not take responsibility for any loss of food items. We will dispose of any food we think may be unsafe, food that is unlabelled or food that is not dated. Non-refrigerated and non-perishable foods can all be stored at room temperature. These include biscuits, chocolates, crackers and lollies. Once you have opened these foods please store them in an air-tight container and label the container with your name.

Please ask your nurse or ward clerk for a label for your food. Please stick the label to the food packaging and write on the label:

- your name
- the date the food was prepared
- the date a packet was opened.

You can choose to use a hospital patient label, but please note that these labels include personal information like your address and date of birth.

## Feedback

If you, your family or friends notice any problems with your meal or the meal service during your stay, please speak with your nurse straight away. Feedback is welcome. We may ask you to complete a survey about the hospital meal service. It is a confidential survey and will not affect your hospital care. The information you give will help us improve the hospital meal service. If you would like to provide written comments separately, please send them to the Consumer Feedback and Engagement Team, Canberra Hospital, PO BOX 11, Woden ACT 2606 or visit: <https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/consumer-feedback>

***We hope you enjoy your meal service. We wish you the very best during your stay.***

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