



TCESC PRESCHOOL PROGRAM PACKED LUNCH REQUIREMENTS

In order to prevent food-borne illnesses, all packed lunches must be in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack.

Keeping Cold Lunches Cold

Why keep food cold? Harmful bacteria multiply rapidly in the 'danger zone' -- the temperatures between 40 and 140 degrees F. So, perishable food transported without an ice source won't stay safe long (typically only 1-2 hours).

Here are safe handling recommendations to prevent food-borne illness from packed lunches.

- An ice source should be packed with perishable food in any type of lunch bag or box.
- Keep food refrigerated until time to leave home.
- Include a small frozen gel pack or frozen juice box.

It is especially important to keep all meats, dairy products (yogurt, soft cheeses, milk), all of the things you find cold in the supermarket, as well as other food, which you would normally keep in the fridge, such as cooked leftovers.

Some food is safe without a cold source. Items that don't require refrigeration include fruits, vegetables, chips, breads, crackers, peanut butter, jelly, mustard, and pickles.

For more information on packing school lunches, please visit

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Keeping_Bag_Lunches_Safe.pdf

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/index.html>

11-2011