



From the desk of the Registered Dietician: *Rachel Robinson, RD, Chief Clinical Dietician*

Food Safety for Home Delivered Meals

Older adults are at greater risk for foodborne illness. Once ill, it can take longer to recover. With age, there is a decrease in stomach acid, which is a natural defense against ingested bacteria. The stomach and intestines may also hold onto food longer in older adults. The immune system, liver, and kidneys also gradually become less efficient at ridding the body of bacteria and toxins. Sense of taste and smell may be altered with age or due to medications. These are senses we may be used to relying on to tell us if food has spoiled. For these reasons, it is important to practice good food safety.

Signs and Symptoms of foodborne illness include upset stomach, diarrhea, fever, vomiting, abdominal cramps, dehydration, more serious illness or even death.

Timeframe for Safe Consumption

- ❖ Enjoy hot foods within 2 hours. If you are not eating food within 2 hours, cover loosely and refrigerate immediately, then reheat thoroughly when ready to eat.
- ❖ Cold food should be eaten or refrigerated immediately.
- ❖ Perishable foods should **not** be left out at room temperature longer than 2 hours.
- ❖ When the temperature is above 90°F, discard food after 1 hour.

Frozen Food Safety

- ❖ Keep frozen food at 0°F or below. Cook thawed foods immediately.
- ❖ Never thaw food at room temperature, such as a countertop.
- ❖ Safe thawing methods are:
 - In the refrigerator
 - In cold water
 - In the microwave

Safety for Reheating

- ❖ Reheat food to 165°F or until hot and steaming, about 30 minutes in a 350°F oven or about 3 minutes on high in a microwave oven.
- ❖ Stir food if necessary to evenly distribute heat. If cold spots remain, continue to heat food until hot and steaming.
- ❖ Let your food sit 2-3 minutes after heating before you eat it to prevent burns.
- ❖ Inadequate heating can contribute to illness.

Safe Holding Temperatures

- ❖ Hot food should be held at 140° or above.
- ❖ Cold food should be held at 40°F or lower.
- ❖ *Harmful bacteria can multiply between 40° and 140°*, so a safe rule of thumb is

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

“Your Contributions help keep senior programs available”

The recommended voluntary contribution for a Friendship Center meal or a Home Delivered meal is \$3.00 per meal. If monthly income is higher than \$1,814 for an individual or \$2,455 for a couple, it is suggested that the contribution be the full cost of the meal: \$7.76 for a frozen meal or \$8.95 for a hot meal. Under 60 Friendship Site guests pay \$8.95. All contributions are voluntary and confidential. No one will be denied a meal if they do not contribute. Thank you!