

Food Safety

School Lunches That Safely Make The Grade

(NAPSA)—Knowing the ABCs of food safety can help parents provide a safer and more nutritious lunch.

Here are some pointers from the National Food Processors Association:

A: Avoid cross-contamination when preparing food. Do not use the same utensils for raw meats and other products.

When preparing lunch, be sure to refrigerate items such as tuna, cold cuts, egg salad and any type of dairy products. Consult food labels to make sure foods are stored at the proper temperature.

Wash hands often, use clean utensils and cutting boards and wash preparation surfaces to reduce the risk of contamination by harmful bacteria.

B. Be sure your children know that foods that have not been stored properly, that smell or taste odd, or that are not sealed correctly should be thrown away. Foods such as peanut butter, box juices and raisins, are particularly useful for field trips or traveling because refrigeration is not required.

When lunches contain perishable items, parents should instruct children to refrigerate lunches at school.



USDA/ARS Photo by Scott Bauer

Since most schools do not provide refrigerators, insulated lunch boxes and freezer gel packs can be used where necessary. Be sure to seal thermoses properly. Children should also wash their hands before eating their lunch. This will reduce the risk of contamination by harmful bacteria.

C: Caution should be used when sharing lunches with other children; allergic reactions to certain food items or ingredients are possible.

Ninety percent of the food allergy reactions in the U.S. are peanuts; tree nuts, such as walnuts, hazelnuts, and almonds; milk; eggs; fish; shellfish, soy and wheat.

Help your children enjoy a safe and nutritious school lunch. For more food safety tips, visit www.safefood.org.