



Food Safety Policy

Food Preparation

Using prepacked food products helps to make sure that the foods are properly labelled with instructions such as [use-by dates](#), [allergen information](#) and storage guidelines.

When preparing meals, the 4 key safety issues are the 4Cs: [cleaning](#), [cooking](#), [chilling](#) and avoiding [cross-contamination](#).

Storage

It's very important to store food properly to keep it safe. Storing food in sealed containers and at the correct temperature protects it from harmful bacteria, stops objects falling into it, and avoids cross-contamination with other ingredients.

Here are some practical tips for when you're making food for large numbers of people:

- wash your hands regularly with soap and water
- always wash fresh fruit and vegetables before cooking or consumption
- keep raw and ready-to-eat foods separate
- do not use food past its use-by date
- always follow cooking instructions
- make sure food is properly cooked before you serve it
- ensure that food preparation areas are suitably cleaned and sanitised after use, and wash any equipment you are using in hot soapy water
- ensure frozen food is [safely defrosted](#) in a fridge before you use it
- keep food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible.

Food temperature

Food that needs to be chilled, such as sandwiches should be left out of the fridge for the minimum possible time, and never for more than four hours.

After this time, any remaining food should be thrown away or [put back in the fridge](#). If you put the food back in the fridge, don't let it stand around at room temperature when you serve it again. It should be eaten as soon as possible.

Sell By Dates

Food cannot be sold, redistributed or consumed after the [use-by date](#).

Best Before Dates

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Food with a best before date can be legally sold, redistributed, and consumed after this date, if judged to be of sufficient quality to be donated and made available to be eaten.

This should include a visual inspection, checking for freshness and any damage. In some instances, torn or damaged outer packaging may be acceptable if the integrity of the primary pack is maintained.

Allergens

We provide details of the relevant [14 allergens](#) as best practice to allow people with food allergies to make safe food choices.

Anyone making or donating foods should label it appropriately:

- What the item is.
- Date of production.
- Details of any allergens.

Higher Risk Foods

- raw milk
- raw shellfish
- soft cheeses
- pâté
- foods containing raw egg
- cooked sliced meats.

Risk Assessments

Guidance on [carrying out risk assessments](#) is provide by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), which also has a risk assessment template an [example risk assessment](#) for food preparation, cooking and service.

Meal Containers

Food in containers is to be of food grade standard. This is packaging intended for multiple uses, such as Tupperware or takeaway boxes.

It is safe to re-use glass and plastic containers, as long as they are free from chips and cracks.

Containers are to be thoroughly cleaned to prevent cross-contamination with germs, allergens and physical contaminants.

If dishwasher safe, a dishwasher is preferable, but as a minimum containers should be washed thoroughly in hot, soapy water.



Approval and Review

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Trustees	Feb 2024	Initial draft approved	Annually

Other Sources of Advice

This advice is based on the Food Standards Agency Food [safety for community cooking and food banks](#). WRAP [redistribution labelling guide](#) and [redistribution labelling checklist](#).