

FOOD GUIDELINES

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Guidelines for Food Served at Room Parties or Brought to School by Students/Parents

Many schools have classroom parties for the holidays or other occasions that include refreshments. In addition, students may often bring treats from home to celebrate a birthday or other special day. Since improperly handled food can be the source of foodborne illness, it is wise to use caution when planning these events.

The Snohomish Health District offers the following guidelines for food in classrooms or for any school related activity:

- Always practice good hygiene when offering food in classrooms, including diligent and effective hand washing. Hands must be washed before setting up the event, after using the restroom, after sneezing or coughing, and as necessary when food is being served.
- Due to the increase in allergies, please check with the school nurse or teacher for any specific allergies in the classroom. Please read labels carefully: some foods have “hidden” source of allergens (for example, tortilla chips fried in peanut oil). NEW
- Limit the types of food you allow. Cakes, breads, cookies, and other non-potentially hazardous baked goods are preferred.
- Food prepared from a commercial source is subject to state and local inspection and therefore more desirable than food made in private homes or a classroom.
- Because of the difficulty of providing adequate refrigeration, do not allow any foods containing custard or cream fillings. Commercial fruit pies are fine, but do not allow pumpkin or other custard pies made with eggs.
- Meat dishes, meat-filled pies, and potato or macaroni salads are prohibited.
- Do not allow any home canned products.
- Fresh fruit can be used if it is washed and cut immediately before it is to be served. All cut melons are considered potentially hazardous and must be kept refrigerated.
- Never serve unpasteurized milk or juice of any kind, especially apple juice or cider. Commercially canned or bottled, pasteurized juice is preferable to drinks mixed at home.
- Food served to children should be served with tongs, spatulas, or other utensils. Disposable utensils and cups are preferable. Minimize the handling of all paper cups, plates, napkins and utensils.