Brown Bag Safety: Packing a Safe School Lunch

Millions of people bring bag lunches to school and work every day because they are quick, convenient, and inexpensive. Bag lunches should be safe and healthy, but because they have to sit on a desk or in a locker for several hours before eating, steps should be taken to keep food safe and prevent foodborne illness.

It is important to keep cold foods cold, and hot foods hot, and be aware of the food temperature "danger zones" (40-140°F).

- Keep everything clean when packing the lunch.
- Use an insulated lunch box and freezer gel packs to help keep foods cold.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water before packing them.
- Pack foods that can be kept at room temperatures.
- Keep your lunch in the coolest place possible!
- Discard leftovers that should remain cold after lunch.
- Wash your hands before eating lunch!
- Use a thermos to keep soups and stews hot.

FOODBORNE ILLNESS remains a major public health threat in the U.S. and can significantly impact the health and well-being of young children.

Persons at highest risk of being affected by foodborne illness are the elderly, children, pregnant women, and individuals with weakened immune systems.

Acute Disease Service
Oklahoma State Department of Health
Creating a State of Health

For more information on foodborne illnesses, call or visit us on the web:

(405) 271-4060 **http://ads.health.ok.gov**