

Why does my child need to follow food safety rules?

Children who have a blood and marrow transplant (BMT) are more at risk for serious infections from germs that may not make other people sick.

- Food can carry germs and molds that could make your child sick. This illness is called food poisoning.
- You need to prepare and store foods safely to keep germs and molds from growing on them.
- There are some foods that your child should not eat because they may be unsafe.
- Your child needs to follow this diet until they are off immune suppression medicines or when their medical team approves.

What are the guidelines when I shop for food?

- Be aware of food recalls. You can find this information at [fda.gov/safety/recalls](https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls).
- Do not buy foods that are past the:
 - Expiration date
 - Sell by date
 - Best used by date
- Do not buy canned foods if the can has any dents or damage.
- Shop for foods in this order:
 - Dry goods first. These are foods that can stay on a shelf.
 - Cold foods next. These are foods that stay in a refrigerator. Cold foods should feel cold.
 - Frozen foods last. These are foods that stay in a freezer. Frozen foods should feel hard.
- Keep raw meat, seafood and eggs separate from other foods in your cart and bags.

What are the guidelines when I put food away?

- You should take food home as soon as you are done shopping.
- Put cold or frozen foods away quickly.
- Check the temperature of your freezer and refrigerator.
 - The freezer should be at or below 0°F (zero degrees Fahrenheit).
 - The refrigerator should be at or below 40°F.
- Keep all dry foods away from heat, moisture and chemicals.
- Seal packages closed, and keep foods in containers with lids.
- Do not leave food out for more than 1 hour.
- Put cooked foods in the refrigerator or freezer as soon as you are done eating.

How long are foods safe in the refrigerator?

Eggs: 7 to 14 days	Raw meats: 1 to 2 days	Leftovers: 24 hours
Raw fish and seafood: 1 to 2 days	Lunch meat: 3 to 5 days	
Raw fruits and vegetables: 7 days	Milk: 5 days after opening	

When in doubt, throw it out.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Food safety for BMT patients, continued

What are the guidelines when I prepare food?

Wash your hands often. Clean them with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.

- Wash them before, during and after each step of making meals.
- Make sure your child washes their hands before they eat.
- Use paper towels to dry hands.

Clean areas where you prepare and serve food

- Clean countertops before and after you prepare food.
- Wash cutting boards with soap and hot water or in the dishwasher before you prepare food on them.
- Use only clean and washed cookware, serving dishes, plates, bowls, cups and utensils.
- Dish towels and sponges can grow germs. Clean and change them out often.
- Wipe down the top of canned foods before you open them.

Keep raw meats and seafood away from ready-to-eat foods

- Use different cutting boards for raw meats, seafood, and cooked or fresh foods like fruits and vegetables.
- Separate raw meat, seafood and eggs from other foods in your refrigerator.
- Never put ready-to-eat food on a plate that had raw meats or eggs on it.

Check foods before cooking and eating them

- Check all fruits and vegetables carefully. Do not eat or serve them if they are bruised or mushy, have torn or cut skin, or are wilted or brown.
- Check foods for mold. Throw away the entire package of food if there is mold. This includes breads, pastries, cheeses, yogurt, fruit, vegetables and jellies.
- Do not use eggs that are cracked or kept out of the refrigerator.
- Throw away dented or damaged cans of food.
- Do not eat foods past their expiration dates.

Wash fresh fruits and vegetables well

- Clean all fruits and vegetables with cold running water. You can use a produce brush that is clean. Dry them with a paper towel.
- Do not use soap or other chemical cleaners to wash fruits and vegetables. If you want to wash them with more than water, cover them in water and add ¼ cup vinegar plus 1 tablespoon baking soda. Let them soak for 10 to 15 minutes. Then drain and rinse well.

Thaw food safely

- Never thaw foods on the kitchen counter or at room temperature. Thaw foods in a refrigerator on a dish to catch any drips, in the microwave, or in a water tight plastic bag under cold water.

Cook food to safe temperatures

- Cook food to the correct temperature to help kill harmful germs. Buy a food thermometer to check the temperature.
 - Hot foods, meats and reheated foods should reach a temperature of 165°F or hotter.
 - Poultry (chicken, turkey, duck and quail) should reach 180°F.
- Do not taste and stir foods with the same spoon.

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Food safety for BMT patients, continued

What foods and drinks should my child NOT eat?

Food group	Not allowed
Fish, meat, poultry and substitutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw, rare or undercooked meat, fish, poultry and substitutes • Cold smoked or pickled fish like smoked salmon, smoked oysters or lox • Raw fish like sushi and sashimi • Hot dogs or packaged deli meats that have not been heated • Deli counter sliced meats or salads • Items from salad bars and buffet lines • Uncooked tempeh or tofu that is not pre-packaged • Raw or undercooked eggs. Eggs should not be runny or have liquid yolks.
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwashed, wilted, moldy, bruised, cut, brown or mushy vegetables • Raw or uncooked sprouts or mushrooms • Items from salad bars and buffet lines • Garnishes like parsley, lemon slices or lettuce used for decoration at restaurants • Homemade Kimchi (commercially prepared is OK) • Salsas stored in refrigerated case at the grocery store
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpasteurized fruit juice • Unwashed, moldy, bruised, cut, brown or mushy fruit • Fresh fruit at restaurants and items from buffet lines or salad bars • Pre-cut fruit from the grocery store
Milk and dairy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk and milk products made from unpasteurized or raw milk • Aged and soft cheeses (bleu, brie, Roquefort, Camembert, Stilton, farmer’s cheese, soft cold Mexican cheese or feta) • Cheeses and other dairy based products from the deli counter, buffet line or salad bar • Homemade eggnog
Nuts and seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuts or seeds in the shell • Unroasted or raw nuts and seeds
Breads, cereals and grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw grain products such as uncooked flour or uncooked oats • Bread items with mold on them
Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well water, unless tested and approved by your child’s medical team • Soda fountain drinks • Ice from public ice machines • Sweet tea made with warm or cold water; mate tea • Kombucha • Unpasteurized milk, fruit and vegetable juices
Desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream-filled pastries not kept in the refrigerator • Soft serve ice cream and frozen yogurt; milkshakes made with soft serve • Icees, slushies and snow cones • Homemade ice cream or ice cream with raw eggs

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Food safety for BMT patients, continued

Food group	Not allowed
Other foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Any foods</u> from salad bar, buffet line, or deli line or counter (including coleslaw and potato salads, fruit salads and vegetable dishes)• Foods from food trucks, street or sidewalk vendors and ice cream trucks• Raw honey or honey in honeycomb• Fresh and dried herbs and spices added after cooking• Homemade jams, jellies, mayonnaise or home canned foods• All Miso products• Herbal and other supplements unless approved by your child's doctor• Uncooked baker's or brewer's yeast

Can I bring foods from home during my child's hospital stay?

Yes. You must follow these food safety rules:

- Make sure foods are made and brought to the hospital on the same day.
- Keep foods in a cooler with ice during transport. Reheat hot foods to the correct temperature.
- You can also make your child commercially packaged frozen foods.
- Eat leftovers within 24 hours of being cooked.

Can my child eat restaurant food during their hospital stay?

No. When your child is in the hospital, they cannot have:

- Restaurant food, food you buy from the cafeteria, or outside drinks from restaurants or coffee shops.
- Food from outside organizations like CURE.

Can my child eat restaurant food after they go home?

Yes, your child can eat restaurant food after they are discharged from the hospital. Takeout is preferred. If your child goes to a restaurant, please be sure to go when it is less busy (less crowded). Be sure to:

- Check the Health Department inspection score, also known as the Food score. **It must be a 90 or higher.** You can check restaurant scores at ga.healthinspections.us/stateofgeorgia.
- Know what foods are not allowed for your child, so you know not to order those foods (see list above in this teaching sheet).
- Ask for fully cooked foods, including eggs and meats. Send the food back if it is undercooked.
- Ask that foods be made fresh. Do not eat food that is sitting out or under a heating lamp.
- Ask that they do not use garnishes like lemon slices, parsley or lettuce used for decoration. Your child can have lettuce, onions, tomato and pickles on foods that come with those items like hamburgers or sandwiches.
- Ask for single-serving condiment packets.
- Order bottled drinks. Avoid soda fountain drinks and ice machines.

IF you are staying at the Ronald McDonald house (RMH) at discharge, you may eat foods prepared by the RMH chef. You should follow the same rules listed above. Your child should not eat foods brought in to RMH or cooked by volunteer groups.

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Food safety for BMT patients, continued

Where can I find more information about food safety?

Please ask your child's nutritionist or health care team if you have any questions about food safety for your child.

You can also read more about food safety at these websites:

- Food Storage Chart from the U.S. Department of Agriculture – foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/storagetimes.html. Download the FoodKeeper app to your phone or check foodsafety.gov for more information.
- Food Safety Tips from the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics – eatright.org/food/home-food-safety

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta has not reviewed all of the sites listed as resources and does not make any representations regarding their content or accuracy. Children's Healthcare of Atlanta does not recommend or endorse any particular products, services or the content or use of any third party websites, or make any determination that such products, services or websites are necessary or appropriate for you or for the use in rendering care to patients. Children's Healthcare of Atlanta is not responsible for the content of any of the above-referenced sites or any sites linked to these Sites. Use of the links provided on this or other sites is at your sole risk.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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