

Important

The RCH provides fridges in parent lounges for storage of parent foods. Some wards also have parent freezers in the parent lounge or ward pantry. All foods stored in parent fridges and freezers must comply with Food Safety posters and **must not be offered to patients** as they are not temperature monitored.

The RCH provides supplies of juice, milk, bread and spreads to parent lounge fridges for parent use. Cereal is also available in the cupboard for parents to prepare their own breakfast.

RCH hospital foods (taken from the patient meal tray) including ice-cream must not be stored in patient or parent fridges or freezers.

Parent fridges and freezers are cleaned and checked weekly.

RCH staff will not be involved in the storage, preparation, handling and provision of food brought in by parents.

WARNING: The RCH cannot accept responsibility for the safety of food prepared from external sources. These foods may be discarded without consultation in the interests of protecting the food safety for all patients, in compliance with food safety legislation.

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Food storage guidelines

Information for parents about
food from external sources
for parent consumption

Families must ensure all foods brought into The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) for their personal consumption are safe and in compliance with food safety legislation. These foods **must not be consumed by patients.**

External sources comprises 'Foods which are prepared in a private domestic kitchen and retail vendors including those within the RCH premises'.



Be aware and take extra care with high-risk foods

Food poisoning bacteria are naturally present in food and in the right conditions it can take just a few hours for a single bacterium to grow into several million bacteria.

Bacteria grow and multiply on some types of food more easily than on others. The types of foods which bacteria prefer include:

- meat, poultry and seafood
- dairy products
- eggs
- smallgoods, like salami and ham
- cooked rice and cooked pasta
- prepared salads, like coleslaws, pasta salads and rice salads and prepared fruit salads
- ready-to-eat foods are foods that can be eaten without further preparation or cooking, such as take-away meals and pre-prepared salads and sandwiches.

Storing, transporting, preparing, cooking and serving food can cause harmful bacteria to grow in food putting you at risk of becoming very unwell.

Ways to ensure food remains safe

- Buy from reputable suppliers with clean premises.
- Avoid spoiled foods, foods past their use-by dates or foods in damaged containers or packaging.

- Ensure chilled and frozen foods are delivered to the RCH in insulated containers with ice packs.
- Clearly label food with parent's name, ward, room number and today's date using the orange labels available next to parent fridges.
- All foods must be stored in a sealed container with a lid. Cooler bags are not permitted in the fridge or freezer.
- Always defrost food in the parent fridge and if using the microwave, consume the food immediately.
- The RCH recommends all meals prepared from external sources are consumed within three days if fresh and two months if frozen.
- Keep raw foods and ready-to-eat foods separated. Use separate utensils when handling these foods.
- Avoid high-risk foods left at room temperature for more than four hours.
- Keep chilled high-risk foods cold at 5°C or colder and hot, high-risk foods hot at 60°C or hotter.
- Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water and dry hands when preparing food.
- A microwave is available in the parent lounge for reheating meals. The meal must be heated through evenly so it is steaming and consumed immediately. Leftovers must be discarded and not reheated again.
- Please remove all foods on discharge.
- When in doubt, throw it out.