

CLASSROOM FOOD SAFETY

Many schools have classroom parties for the holidays or other special occasions that include refreshments. In addition, students may 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. Always practice good hygiene when offering food in classrooms, including proper 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.

The Snohomish County Health Department offers the following guidelines for handling or serving food in classrooms:

01 LIMIT THE TYPES OF FOODS ALLOWED

All food must come from an approved commercial source – no home prepared food items due to the concern for food safety and allergens.

02 LIMIT FOODS THAT NEED REFRIGERATION

You may also keep it cold by refrigerating on site or storing on ice. Meat dishes, potato and macaroni salads and pumpkin and custard-filled pies should not be brought into the classroom.

03 USE FRESH FRUIT IMMEDIATELY

Fresh fruit can be used if it is washed and cut immediately before it is to be served. Cut melons can grow bacteria and must be refrigerated if not served immediately. Wear disposable gloves when cutting fruit or vegetables.

04 ONLY USE PASTEURIZED MILK OR JUICE

Never serve unpasteurized milk or juice of any kind, especially apple juice or cider. Any home-canned products should stay at home.

05 USE SERVING UTENSILS

Food served to children should be served with tongs, spatulas, or other utensils. Disposable utensils and cups are preferable.