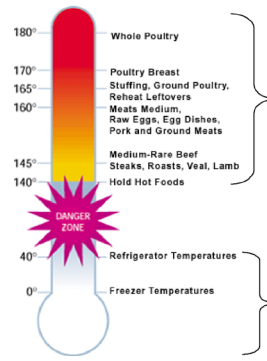


4. Cook

- Cook food to the recommended internal temperature. You should measure temperatures with a clean, calibrated food thermometer.
- Don't cook food partially for finishing later because that increases the risk of bacterial growth.
- Keep time between cooking and serving to a minimum. Try to prepare and cook food within two hours of the event.



KEEP HOT FOODS HOT

- ▶ Hold cooked or reheated food above 60°C (140°F); place in hot holding equipment, such as chafing dishes, crock pots and warming trays.
- ▶ Reheat previously prepared food to 74°C (165°F), using stove, oven or microwave oven.
- ▶ Check temperatures frequently!

KEEP COOL FOODS COLD

- ▶ Place cold food in Glass, Stainless Steel, or Crockery containers – not plastic – containers on ice.
- ▶ Keep cold food at or below 4°C (40°F).

5. Chill

- Refrigerate perishable foods promptly in shallow containers. Thick foods such as stew should be no more than two inches deep; thinner foods such as soup should be no more than three inches deep.
- Keep refrigerators at 4°C (40°F) or lower.

We work to protect the public from risks of illness and injury so all citizens can achieve and maintain well-being and enjoy healthy productive lives.



Who can I call for more info?:

Contact your local Environmental Health Officer or Office:

Northern Interior:

Prince George: (250) 565-2150
Quesnel: (250) 983-6810
Vanderhoof: (250) 567-6900

Northwest:

Terrace: (250) 638-2222
Smithers: (250) 847-7360
Prince Rupert: (250) 624-7480

Northeast:

Dawson Creek: (250) 719-6500
Fort Nelson: (250) 774-7092
Fort St. John: (250) 263-6000

**For more information, visit
www.northernhealth.ca**

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Safe Foods For Potlucks



**northern health
public health**

partners in wellness

Why do people need to be sure to cook safe food for potlucks?

Food served at pot lucks can and does cause illness. In August 2006, a woman in Longville, Minnesota died from kidney failure, a complication from an E. coli infection she contracted at a potluck. Fortunately, this is a rare event.

While most food is safe, any food can become contaminated. When preparing foods in larger quantities, there's an increased risk of the foods becoming contaminated or held at temperatures that allow rapid growth of bacteria.

The foods that are most likely to cause illness if they're contaminated are those we call higher risk foods. Examples of these would be ready-to-eat foods and moist, high-protein foods such as milk and milk products, poultry, fish, pork, shellfish, cooked rice, potatoes and soy protein foods.

When might NH's Public Health Protection staff regulate a community event, such as a potluck?

NH's Public Health Protection staff regulate community events that are advertised or open to the general public. If a club has a luncheon or tea after their congregation service for its members and their guests, it's considered a private/closed event... so Public Health does not get involved. But if the club advertised a lunch or tea for the general public to attend, NH staff would like to work with them to make their event as safe as possible.

If we have a big potluck planned for the community, what are the steps we should take to organize it and get our permit?

- Call your local Environmental Health Officer, and they'll help you with your process;
- Get a short-term permit application and Guidelines for Temporary Food Service Premises, which will help you plan your cooking. A short-term permit is free;
- Talk about the menu and submit a food safety plan, which is a written set of procedures to ensure that a health hazard doesn't occur;
- Make sure the cooking facility you're using has adequate equipment for the type of food service you've planned, and that it's a permitted facility;
- You must have at least one person with "FOODSAFE" training present and in charge of the event at all times. **For more information: www.FoodSafe.ca**



What are the top five food safety points that we should know in preparing food for potlucks?

1. **Make sure you wash your hands well!**
 - Use warm, running water and liquid soap. Rub your hands together for 20 seconds, and rub the backs of your hands, your wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
 - Rinse well under running water.
 - Dry hands with paper towel.
 - Turn off water with the paper towel.
 - Throw away the paper towel into lined, covered waste basket.
2. **Clean the food prep area well**
 - Wash your hands and then wash any surfaces that come into contact with food.
 - Wash and sanitize food contact surfaces.
 - Dishcloths must be washed in hot water and sanitized between each use.
 - Make a sanitizing solution by mixing 2.5 ml of bleach into a litre of water.
3. **Separate**
 - Don't cross-contaminate! Keep raw meat away from ready-to-eat foods such as lettuce, melons and bread. Cross-contamination can spread bacteria quickly.
 - Wash cutting boards and sanitize cutting boards after you've used them.