



University of California  
Cooperative Extension  
Tulare County

Agriculture and Natural Resources



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## IT'S A GRAB AND GO WORLD

Mealtime is “grab and go” for many people. Take-out is taking over. Wherever you obtain your take-out food, certain food safety tips apply:

- Two hours is the maximum time perishable foods should be kept at room temperature. When not kept under control, bacteria can grow rapidly. If you’re serving food in temperatures over 90°F, such as a picnic, limit the time in which food sits out to one hour or less. Perishable foods include meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, pasta, rice and cooked vegetables. Also, refrigerate fresh, peeled and/or cut fruits and vegetables within a couple of hours.
- Refrigerate hot take-out foods right away if you won’t be eating them within two hours—let the refrigerator cool them down. Leave the corners of containers cracked open to help food cool faster. Cover tightly once the food is cooled. If you leave your pizza and other perishable foods at room temperature for more than a couple of hours, TOSS them out. Some types of bacteria can form a heat-resistant toxin that cooking can’t destroy.
- Plan to eat take out foods and leftovers within a day for greater safety and quality.
- Don’t reheat take-out food in its original container in the microwave, unless the container is described as safe for microwave use. Chemicals from carryout containers can be absorbed into foods at high temperatures. Safe containers for microwave cooking include glass and glass ceramic cookware, and those labeled for microwave use.

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- You can't always see, smell or taste bacteria that cause food-borne illness. It takes from ½ hour to two or more weeks before you get sick from contaminated food. Sometimes it's hard to know if food has been handled safely. If you don't know, give food the heave ho!

Contact your Cooperative Extension Office for more tips on food safety.

**Source: Food Talk Newsletter, September 1998. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County.**

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