

Ronald McDonald House  
Charities of Western Washington & Alaska

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**Food Handling, Preparation and Storage Guidelines\***

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Food Safety is important for everyone but it is especially important for the children living at the Ronald McDonald House. Children with weakened immune systems are more at risk to infections brought on by disease-causing bacteria that contaminate food. To avoid this, we must be especially cautious when handling, preparing and transporting food.

Please keep in mind, as you are reading through the following information, that our main concern is the bacteria and germs that can occur in food that is prepared or transported incorrectly. Let each person in your group know how important it is to read the following guidelines prior to coming to the House.

**Please stay at home if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:** sore throat, runny nose, coughing or sneezing, watery eyes, fever, chills, unexplained rashes, general aches, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea **or if you have recently been exposed to or have** chicken pox, shingles, measles, tuberculosis, influenza, or hepatitis. **Only children over the age of 13 may accompany your group. They must also have had chickenpox or been vaccinated for chickenpox.**

1. **Arrival time is 3:00. The earliest we can allow dinner groups to arrive is 2:30, and this must be arranged in advance.**
2. **Dinner service begins at 5:00 PM and buffet service continues until at least 6:00, and until families have stopped coming through the buffet line.**
3. **All food must be prepared on-site with the exception of desserts and breads which may be prepared in a residential kitchen, or commercially prepared and brought or delivered to the House.** Meats may be marinated at home (see #4 for transporting food to the House).
4. **Take special care in transporting food to the House:**
  - Potentially hazardous food (see #8) must be transported in coolers on ice.
  - Hot food that is commercially prepared off-site and transported to the House by the dinner group must arrive at the House within 60 minutes from time of purchase. If the temperature on arrival is less than 140 degrees, it must be reheated to 165 degrees.
5. **Wash hands often and well:** Clean hands are the most important food safety tool.
6. **Never touch ready-to-eat food with bare hands:**
  - Use serving utensils to handle food
  - Wear gloves (provided by the House), when doing food prep at the House.  
**Important Rules for Using Gloves**
    - Wash hands before using gloves and after removing gloves
    - Change gloves that get ripped or become contaminated
    - Never wash or reuse gloves.
    - Change gloves between working with raw and ready-to-eat foods

7. **Clean and sanitize all food preparation surfaces:**

- Before using
- In between preparation of different food items
- During final clean up

At home, use hot soapy water or disinfectant. At the House, use the supplied DZ-7 disinfectant spray and paper towels to clean work surfaces, serving counters, and dining tables. **When using DZ-7, dry surface thoroughly before using.**

8. **Keep potentially hazardous foods hot or cold:**

- These are defined as foods in which bacteria are more likely to grow.
- These foods include:
  - Animal products (includes eggs, dairy products)
  - Cooked starches (rice, beans, pasta, potatoes)
  - Fruits and vegetables as follows: cooked vegetables, tofu, cut melons.
- Prepare foods in small batches so large amounts of food do not sit out at room temperature for long periods of time.
- Keep potentially hazardous foods out of the **Danger Zone (41-140 degrees F)**.  
Maintain the following temperatures of foods as they are being held and served:
  - Hot food holding temperature= 140 degrees F or higher**
  - Cold food holding temperature= 41 degrees F or colder**

9. **Cook food to proper temperature** (thermometers provided)

- **165 degrees F:** poultry, hot dogs, stuffed foods and stuffing, casseroles, canned foods, all reheated food
- **160 degrees F:** beef, pork, veal, lamb (steaks, roasts, chops); ground beef (includes hamburgers and any dish that contains ground beef); egg dishes
- **145 degrees F:** fish
- **140 degrees F:** hot-held vegetables
- All meats must be fully cooked (well done).

Ham: if precooked and in original package, heat to **140 degrees**.

If not in original package or ham is a leftover being reheated, it must be heated to **165 degrees**

If grilling hamburgers or other individual pieces of meat, every piece needs to be checked with a thermometer. Remember, with thin pieces of meat; insert the probe into the side of the meat so that the entire sensing area is in the food.

10. **Keep raw meat away from other food to prevent cross contamination.**

- Wash and sanitize surfaces that come in contact with raw meat.
- Use a separate cutting board for raw meat.
- Wash hands after handling raw meat.

11. **Prohibited foods are as follows:**

- Non-pasteurized juice and milk products
- Raw seed sprouts, such as alfalfa sprouts
- Undercooked meat, fish, or eggs
- Alcohol: No alcohol may be brought to the House, including the use of it as an ingredient in on-site food preparation.

**12. Know the ingredients of your dishes:**

- Some of our families may have questions or concerns of possible food allergies or sensitivities.

**13. Leftover Food Storage:** Families returning to the House after dinner will help themselves to the leftover food. Package as follows:

- Cool hot food as quickly as possible to **70 degrees or less** before storing as leftovers. To cool, spread out in thin layer in pan and place pan on ice. Stir often to dissipate the heat.
- All leftover food, should be stored in plastic bags (House A) and plastic containers (House C) which are provided by the House.
- All leftovers, including lettuce, must be portioned into family-size servings (we cannot have more than one family accessing the same container of leftovers).
- Mark each bag or container using a permanent marker with the **date, contents**, and the word "**House.**"
- Place bags in the community refrigerators (or freezers, if appropriate).
- All foods must be portioned and stored. The only leftovers that may remain on the serving counters are rolls and shelf-stable desserts. Desserts such as cakes or cookies may be left whole and/or on platters rather than portioned into leftover servings.
- Leftover baked potatoes must be cut and cooled before storing. They may not be stored whole.

**12. Washing dishes by hand:** (Gloves must be worn while washing and handling clean dishes)

1. Clean sinks and sanitize with DZ-7 spray. Rinse with clear water.
2. **Wash** dishes in hot, soapy running water.
3. **Rinse** dishes with hot, running water.
4. **Sanitize** by dipping dishes in the tub of sanitizing rinse (**do not rinse after this step**).
5. **Air-dry** for as long as possible on drying rack.
6. If needed, finish drying with paper towels before putting dishes away.

\* All items from Meal Program shelves are washed by hand. All other items are washed in the dishwasher.

\*adapted from the Washington State Food and Beverage Workers' Manual