

Not all food and drinks are suitable for hospital patients

Safe items

- Dry biscuits or crackers – e.g. Sao, rice crackers
- Sweet Biscuits – e.g. Butternut, Nice,
- Plain cakes, muffins or fresh bread (no cream or custard filling or cream cheese icing)
- Pretzels, chips and popcorn
- Muesli bars, lollies and chocolate
- Washed whole fresh fruit or dried
- Canned or packaged items
- Spreads – e.g. jam and honey
- Bottled and canned drinks – e.g. soft drink, tea



Unsafe items

- Meats, Seafood and Poultry – e.g. raw, smoked, undercooked and pre-cooked peeled prawns
- Raw eggs– e.g. in smoothies, homemade mayonnaise, mousses, desserts, dressings and sauces
- Raw tofu and tempeh
- Raw nuts
- Cold soup and miso soup
- Cooked cold rice, including sushi
- Soft, semi-soft and surface ripened cheeses – e.g. camembert, brie, ricotta, fetta and blue-vein
- Unpasteurised dairy products – e.g. raw milk or yoghurt and cheese
- Soft serve ice cream and frozen yoghurt
- Cold meats – e.g. cooked or uncooked, packaged or unpackaged e.g. ham, roast beef, cold cooked chicken
- Dips, patés, liverwurst and meat spreads
- Salads, fruit salads and sandwiches purchased from a shop
- Takeaway foods
- Raw mushrooms and sprouts



Storing food in hospital

It is best if the items are consumed immediately. If you need to store items for a short period of time, please ask your nurse for assistance.

- Food and drinks to be stored in the fridge must be in a sealed container and marked with your name, bed number, date and time the food was brought into hospital.
- All items stored in the fridge should not be kept for more than 24 hours.
- Pre-packaged items that have been opened, such as biscuits, cakes and crackers, must also be stored in an airtight container marked with your name, bed number, date and time they were brought into hospital.

Feedback

If you have had a positive experience and found something particularly useful, the staff would be pleased to hear your comments. If you notice any problems with your meal or meal services please alert your nutrition assistant. Alternatively, written comments can be sent to the Food Services Team.

Please note this document is a brief guide. More detailed information can be found at the following websites:

Food Standards Australia New Zealand:
www.foodstandards.gov.au

NSW Food Authority:
www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

Food Safety Information Council:
<http://www.foodsafety.asn.au/>



Guidelines for bringing occasional food or drinks in for patients



St Vincent's Health Australia Sydney facilities cannot accept responsibility for food provided to patients that has been brought into the hospital by visitors. St Vincent's Health Australia Sydney facilities are committed to providing a high standard of meals, which are safe, meet nutritional standards and compliant with the legislative requirements.

Food and drinks brought in for patients

A nutritious menu is provided by the hospital to meet your dietary needs and food safety standards. Bringing in food or drink is not encouraged and the hospital cannot accept responsibility for storing, heating or serving these items.

If food is brought in it is important to:

- Ask your nurse if you are on a special diet.
- Identify how the items were prepared, stored and transported to the facility to ensure it is free from harmful bacteria and follow the St Vincent's Health Australia facilities instructions on ensuring food and drinks are kept safe.

Food poisoning

Food poisoning can be a very serious illness for patients, particularly the elderly, patients recovering from surgery and those with a reduced immune function. It is caused by eating food that contains harmful levels of bacteria or toxins. Bacteria can multiply to dangerous levels between 5°C and 60°C. Limit time food is in the danger zone by refrigerating or reheating to steaming point. If items are left within the danger zone for more than 4 hours they must be discarded.



Food preparation

- ALWAYS wash your hands in running, warm soapy water or use hand sanitizer gel before preparing food or drinks.
- Separate raw and cooked items – e.g. raw meat, chicken, fish and seafood.
- Do not prepare foods too far in advance
- Wash items well under running water
- Keep utensils such as knives, saucepans and chopping boards clean
- Do not thaw items at room temperature – thaw in the refrigerator
- Cook food thoroughly
- If you are unwell, do not prepare food for patients
- Ensure the items are in a sealed container when you bring them in

Keep items clean

- ALWAYS wash and dry your hands thoroughly before handling or eating any food, even a snack
- Don't share any items brought in with other patients
- Don't eat food past its use by date
- Read food labels for storage instructions



Keep cold items cold

- It is essential to keep cold items at **5°C** or less.
- Transport items in an esky or cooler bag with ice bricks
- Don't pack food if it has been cooked and is still warm

How to ensure food and drinks are kept safe...
Clean, Cook, Cover and Chill'



- Put any chilled food straight away in the ward fridge or fridge in your room.
- If a cold food item has been left out of the fridge for two hours or more it needs to be discarded

Keep hot food hot

- Bringing in hot food that has travelled long distances is not recommended as it is difficult to keep hot. If this occurs, keep items steaming hot (greater than **60°C**) during transport in a thermos or insulated container. Alternatively items can be cooled quickly after cooking in the home by placing them straight in the fridge or freezer.
- Reheat foods (using the microwave on the ward) until it's steaming hot or boiling (to ensure it reaches a minimum of **75°C**) to kill harmful bacteria. If you are reheating, ensure that the food is heated evenly.
- When cooking meat and poultry make sure the juices run clear.
- Ensure reheated foods are consumed within **2 hours**
- NEVER reheat food more than once
- Never leave hot food to cool on the bench