

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

No. 213

### ***FOOD SAFETY - TRANSPORTING FOOD***

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If the food you are transporting is potentially hazardous, it is to be maintained at a temperature that minimises the opportunity for pathogenic bacteria to grow, having regard to the time it takes to transport food.

There are three main food safety rules you should follow when transporting food:

- keep the food protected from contamination (in sealed containers, keep the vehicle clean, no animals etc.)
- keep the food colder than 5°C; or
- keep the food hotter than 60°C.

#### **PROTECTING FOOD FROM CONTAMINATION**

When transporting foods it is important to protect them from contamination by keeping them covered at all times. This can be achieved by applying plastic film over containers or using containers with lids. Unless they are damaged, wrapped products should not need additional covering if they are already packaged.

Any open food should be placed in clean containers and covered. Materials used to cover food should be suitable for food contact to ensure they do not contain any chemicals that could leach into the food. Aluminium foil, plastic film and clean paper may be used but food should be completely covered. Previously used materials and newspaper may contaminate food so these materials should not be used in direct contact with any food.

#### **TEMPERATURE CONTROL**

When potentially hazardous foods are transported they should be maintained colder than 5°C or hotter than 60°C during the journey. Alternatively you could use time, rather than temperature, to keep the food safe while it is transported. For more advice see temperature control fact sheet. If the journey is short, insulated containers eg. -Eskies with ice bricks may keep the food cold. If the journey is long or on hot days, a portable refrigerator may be required.

Hot food may be maintained hot in insulated containers or with heat packs for short periods. Portable ovens may be required to keep food hot over longer trips. Food must be pre-heated or pre-cooled before placing in an insulated container. The container must have a closefitting lid to help maintain safe temperatures. The container must be in good condition and kept clean at all times and used only for food.

Insulated containers must be:

- in good clean condition
- used only for food
- kept away from items such as chemicals, pet food, fuel and paint
- be filled as quickly as possible and closed as soon as they have been filled
- kept closed until immediately before the food is needed or is placed in other temperature-controlled equipment.

**OTHER TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS**

- Keep the journey as short as possible and plan ahead.
- Make packing potentially hazardous foods into insulated containers your last job.

Containers for cold food should be placed in the coolest part of the vehicle. If the vehicle is air-conditioned, store cold food inside it, rather than in the boot.

- Vehicles must be clean. If pets or dirty equipment have been previously carried, the intended food storage area must be thoroughly cleansed or lined to minimise the likelihood of contamination.

Make it your first job to unload any hot or cold food and place it into on-site temperature control.

For more information contact your local Environmental Health Office.

Contact details can be found at

[http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Environmental\\_Health/Contact\\_us/index.aspx](http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Environmental_Health/Contact_us/index.aspx)