

## Guidelines for Bringing in Food

1. If you're not sure what your loved one can eat, ask the Nutrition & Food Services staff for help.
2. Write your loved one's name, the type of food, and the date and time you brought it on the container.
3. Put dry or packaged food in a sealed container with a label, and store it in the resident/ patient room.
4. Put food that needs to stay cold in a sealed container with a label, and store it in *patient/ resident* fridge.
5. If the food needs to be heated up, use a container that's safe and easy for reheating.
6. Food brought in for client social functions cannot be stored or reheated by staff. NFS staff can not heat outside food.
7. ***Nutrition and Food Services will not accept responsibility for food brought in by family or friends. Foods brought in for loved ones are the responsibility of the family to store, reheat or to ensure safety of the food for patients/ residents.***



Image: Residents participating in therapeutic coloring. SHA [Nutrition and Food Services]. Feb 4, 2026.



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### Noteworthy

Only your loved one should eat the food you bring. Do not share it with other people because others may have allergies or special diets.

Food kept in the patient/ resident fridge should be thrown away after 36 hours. If staff have any concern about food safety, it will be thrown out.

Perishable food (like meat, dairy, or cooked meals) should not be left out for more than 2 hours.



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## Bringing Outside Food for your Loved ones

### Nutrition & Food Services

A visitor's guide to bringing safe food into SHA Facilities for your loved ones. Foods that are brought in should only be served to your loved one.



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## Preparing Safe Food

- Do not prepare food for others if you are not well. You could pass on your illness to them.
- **Always wash your hands** with hot, soapy water for 20 seconds before preparing or serving food; moving between uncooked and cooked products; and anytime you touch anything dirty.
- Move food as quickly as possible between locations. Never leave food sitting in a warm vehicle. Use thermoses, coolers or ice packs to keep it hot or cold.
- Keep hot foods hot (above 60°C) and cold foods cold (less than 4°C) at all times, including transportation. This helps to prevent food poisoning.
- **Food should only be held for 2 hours before being discarded.**
- Microwave safe containers should be used for foods that will be reheated in a microwave
- Use sealed containers to store food

## Did You Know?

Hospitals and care homes need to make sure families know the risks of bringing in outside food. Some people have special diets because of allergies, health problems, or trouble chewing and swallowing. To keep everyone safe, **please don't share food with others.**

Getting gifts from family and friends is always nice. People in care can get sick more easily from food because of their changed health status. That's why it's important to think carefully about the kind of food you bring.



Image: Resident and family member during meal service. SHA [Nutrition and Food Services]. Feb 4, 2026.

## What Should I Bring?

### Low risk foods are preferred

High risk are more likely to cause food poisoning.

### Low Risk Foods:

- Raw fruits and vegetables, and served with store bought dressing or dips
- Fruit pies and tarts
- Cookies, muffins, loaves, breads, and buns
- Cakes and squares (no cream fillings)
- Restaurant meals (if kept hot or cold during transport)
- Unopened packaged foods

### High Risk Foods:

- Cream, meringue, or pumpkin pies
- Pastries with cream or meat filling
- Eggs, devilled eggs, or pickled eggs
- Macaroni or potato salad
- Homemade dressings, sauces, or dips
- Unpasteurized dairy products
- Cooked or creamed vegetables
- Meat, poultry, fish, or shellfish dishes or casseroles
- Sandwiches made with fillings such as egg, meat, fish, seafood, poultry, cheese
- Gravies or home-made sauces
- Home-canned or prepared foods