

## WARD FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES - Management of food items brought into the Trust for patients

The quality and safety of foods from external sources, including food brought in by visitors, cannot be guaranteed. These guidelines shall be followed in order to prevent the risk of food poisoning and other food-borne illnesses.

Hospital patients are particularly susceptible to illness that may be spread through food; the consequences of eating contaminated food can be serious leading abdominal pain, nausea, diarrhoea and vomiting. **In ‘at risk’ groups of the population, which includes all hospital patients, food poisoning and other food-borne illnesses can lead to death.** It is for this reason that vigilance is required to ensure the food eaten by patients presents no risk to health. This cannot be guaranteed with food brought into the Trust from external sources and it is for this reason that the following guidance has been produced.

Brought-in Low Risk Foods	Brought-in High Risk Foods
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low risk non temperature sensitive foods are unlikely to be associated with food borne illness and are therefore considered to be of minimal risk if brought in for patients.</li> <li>2. Permitted foods include pre-wrapped biscuits, whole fresh fruit, confectionary and snack items such as chocolate and crisps, bottled or canned drinks of a non alcoholic nature.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High risk temperature sensitive foods are commonly associated with food borne illnesses unless food preparation and storage are strictly managed. It is for this reason that Patient’s and their relatives should be strongly discouraged from bringing in such foods.</li> <li>2. High risk foods that should be restricted include any meat, poultry, fish, rice or dairy based food items prepared either by a relative/visitor or purchased from an external source, e.g. sandwiches, cream cakes, take away foods.</li> </ol>

### Ward Staff (Clinical) Responsibility

1. Advise patients that brought-in foods should be limited to low risk items as recommended above.
2. Should occasions arise when high risk foods are brought in by visitors/relatives or bought by patients then encourage patients to consume immediately otherwise it is recommended that the food be discarded. In the case of cold food this may be kept in the ward kitchen fridge provided it is adequately wrapped/sealed, labeled with the date & time placed in the fridge and individuals name. Home produced food to be eaten cold must be used or discarded within 24 hours, and containers taken home. Foods that are pre-packed may be stored for the shelf life (use by/best before) stated on the pack prior to opening. However, once opened the food must be consumed. The on-going storage of such food is only permissible if stated on the packaging. The date of opening shall be labeled on the food which shall then be used within its reduced shelf life.  
**On no occasion shall raw foods, foods passed their use by date, hot foods or suspect foods be placed in the ward fridge; such foods shall be discarded.**
3. **Please note:** Pre-packed sandwiches and salads have been linked with Listeriosis (a food borne illness). At particular risk are those who are immunocompromised due to illness/disease and/or medication/treatment, the over 60’s age group, pregnant woman and new-born babies. Such patients should be discouraged from consuming pre-packed sandwiches/salads if not supplied via Patient Catering, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
4. Ward staff should record details of any high-risk food consumed in the patient’s care plan.
5. **On no occasion shall foods brought-in by patients or their relatives/visitors be cooked or re-heated by Ward Staff other than shop bought pre-packed ready meals if approved by ward manager.**
6. **On no occasion shall staff purchase take-away foods or other high-risk foods for consumption by patients.**

*These guidelines have been produced to promote the health and safety of patients during their time in hospital. Please direct queries or concerns to Patient Catering at 0113 20 63365 8am – 4pm*