

Although the traditional bake sale foods such as breads, muffins, and cookies rarely cause illness, it is necessary to keep in mind that, under the right circumstances, any food can cause foodborne disease. Every step of the process is important - planning, preparation, packaging, transportation, display, and serving. The following are recommendations for a safe bake sale:

Planning

Board of Health

- Contact your local Board of Health office prior to a bake sale to inform them about the date, location, and type of food. Ask if you need a permit for the bake sale. This is not usually necessary but is required in certain circumstances such as when the bake sale is held at an event (fair, etc.).

Menu

- Limit the menu to items which do not require refrigeration. In general, baked goods are considered non-potentially hazardous (low-risk) foods. Some examples of low-risk foods are:
 - Cookies, brownies, muffins, breads, scones, or candy.
- Do not include items that require refrigeration after preparation. Some examples of potentially hazardous foods that should not be included in the bake sale are:
 - Cream filled pastries, pies, whipped cream, cheese cakes, custard desserts, and similar.
 - Meat, poultry, or fish in the form of salads or sandwiches should not be sold at bake sales.

Food allergies

- Consider the following:
 - Most common foods that can cause allergies include: eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, milk, strawberries, citrus, and wheat.
 - Plan to separate and label foods that contain allergens.

Preparation

- It is critical to follow sound sanitation practices:
 - Clean and sanitize food preparation surfaces, utensils and equipment before beginning work.
 - Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water and dry with a paper towel, before preparing any food.
 - Do not smoke or eat during preparation.
 - Do not prepare food if you:
 - have a communicable disease such as flu, common cold, or hepatitis.
 - suffer from vomiting, diarrhea, or any other symptom of gastrointestinal disease.
 - have open wounds, cuts, or sores on your hands or arms.
 - are a carrier of a communicable disease.
 - Limit non-essential person and pet traffic in the kitchen area during food preparation.
 - Repeat hand washing after using the bathroom, eating, smoking, changing diapers, caring for pets, or handling raw meat, poultry, and produce.



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Preparation continued

- Use safe food ingredients:
 - All food ingredients must be pure and free from contamination and adulteration.
 - Retain a list of food items and where they were purchased. If donated, include the name, address, and telephone number of the contributor, next to the name of the donated food.

Packaging

- Wrap baked goods in individual servings to protect them from microbial, chemical, and physical contamination during transport, storage, and display.
- Use containers approved for food storage.
- The use of plastic trash bags for food storage or transport is not recommended because they are not food-grade plastic and chemicals from them may be absorbed into the food.

Transportation

- Use clean, maintained in good sanitary condition vehicle for food transportation.
- Tightly wrap all items to protect from dust, dirt, and insects.
- If transporting food in a vehicle with pets the food needs to be in a sealed container and the pets cannot be in contact with the food container at any time.

Display

- Protect all food items from contamination. Use sneeze guards, plastic wrap, or aluminum foil to cover the food.
- Consider food allergies:
 - Position potentially allergen food items away from the rest, or use a separate container and table.
 - Label foods with most common allergens (“contains nuts”).

Serving

- Never use bare hands to handle and serve food.
- Use disposable plastic gloves.
- Use tongs, other utensils, or tissues for food handling and serving.