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*Listening, learning,
and living together:
it's the science of life.*

Food Safety for Take-Out and Delivered Meals¹

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In today's hectic world it can be challenging for many families to make time for everyone and everything. It is no surprise that many American families have already replaced home food preparation and cooking with eating out, taking out, or delivery.

To protect your family, it's important to follow proper handling of these foods. Any perishable foods can cause illness when they are not handled properly, even if they were prepared according to the sanitary standards. In order to reduce risk from these foods, here are a few tips your family can follow.

First, keep hot food hot and cold food cold! Once food is cooked, the hot food should have an internal temperature of 140° or hotter, and the cold foods must be kept at 40° or colder. This is because bacteria can grow rapidly between temperatures of 40°-140°. Discard all perishable foods-such as meat, fish, cut fruits, casserole, or cooked rice-left at room temperature longer than two hours. But during summer months, if the air temperature is above 90°, those foods should be discarded after spending only one hour at that temperature (United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service, 2003).

If you are not eating the take-out or delivered food right away, store it in shallow containers in your refrigerator. Since most food has a limited shelf life, mark it with a date

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label to help remind you how long the food has been in the refrigerator. Taking a few quick steps can help protect your family from foodborne illness.

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To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/fooddelivery.mp3

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/fooddelivery.wav

References

United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service. (2003). *Safe food handling: Safe handling of take-out foods*. Retrieved May 2007, from <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/takeoutfoods.htm>