Keeping Lunch Safe!

If your child's school doesn't have fridges or microwaves for students to use, it can be a challenge to keep hot and cold foods at a safe temperature until lunch. Keeping hot foods **hot** and cold foods **cold** can prevent the growth of unwanted germs that can make children sick. Food shouldn't sit at room temperature for more than two hours, especially if it has meat, egg, cheese, fish, mayonnaise or poultry.

Tips for packing a safe lunch:

- Wrap food tightly and keep it in the fridge overnight, if needed.
- Use a thermos for hot foods like soup or chili. To keep food hot longer, fill your thermos with hot water first for a few minutes. Empty out water before filling with hot food.
- Send an ice pack or freeze items like yogurt tubes or water bottles to keep everything cold. They should thaw by lunch time.
- Use an insulated lunch bag rather than a plastic bag or box. This will help keep your child's hot foods **hot** and cold foods **cold**. Clean out the lunch bag at the end of each day.

Remind your child to wash hands with warm soapy water for 20 seconds (or the time it takes to sing the "ABC" song) before eating or touching food.

To learn more about food safety, check out *Keeping School Lunches Safe* at www.albertahealthservices.ca/EnvironmentalHealth/wf-eh-keeping-school-lunches-safe.pdf

For more information, please visit the Alberta Health Services school nutrition website at www.albertahealthservices.ca/2925.asp