

Lunchbox Safety Quiz

Packing safe and healthy lunches is just as important as what goes inside them! Test your food safety knowledge and learn how to keep your lunches safe to eat.



- 1. Should lunchboxes be cleaned every day?**
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
- 2. How long can perishable foods be left at room temperature?**
 - A. 4 hours
 - B. 2 hours
 - C. No time limit
 - D. Overnight
- 3. At what temperatures do bacteria multiply fastest, increasing the risk of food poisoning?**
 - A. 120°F – 212°F
 - B. 40°F – 140°F
 - C. 32°F – 40°F
 - D. 0°F or lower
- 4. How long can your lunch safely sit in a hot car (90°F or hotter) without ice or gel packs?**
 - A. 1 hour
 - B. 2 hours
 - C. 4 hours
 - D. 1 day
- 5. How long should you wash your hands with warm water and soap before eating lunch?**
 - A. Until your hands are wet
 - B. 10 seconds
 - C. 20 seconds
 - D. 60 seconds
- 6. What type of lunchbox is the safest?**
 - A. Plastic lunchbox
 - B. Paper sack
 - C. Insulated lunchbox with frozen gel packs
- 7. Is it safe to reuse plastic sandwich bags?**
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
- 8. When reheating food in a microwave, what internal temperature should it reach to be safe?**
 - A. 165°F
 - B. 209°F
 - C. 212°F
 - D. Any temperature

Answer Key & Tips

1. **A. Yes** - Clean and sanitize lunchboxes every day to remove crumbs, spills, and bacteria that can lead to food poisoning. A solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water may be used to sanitize lunchboxes, countertops, and utensils.
2. **C. 2 hours** - Never leave perishable foods such as meat, poultry, and dairy products out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours.
3. **B. 40°F–140°F** - This temperature range is known as the “danger zone”. Perishable foods should be kept at 40°F or colder or held above 140°F to limit food safety risks.
4. **A. 1 hour** - Never leave perishable foods exposed to temperatures above 90°F (like a hot car or at the park). In these conditions, food needs to be refrigerated within 1 hour. Above 90°F, perishable foods spoil much faster.
5. **B. 20 seconds** - Use soap and water and scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. Dry with a clean towel.
6. **C. Insulated lunchbox with frozen gel packs** - Pick a lunchbox that fits at least two cold sources like gel packs, frozen water bottles or frozen juice boxes. Place one cold item above the food and one below to keep everything at a safe temperature.
7. **B. No** - After lunch, discard all leftover food, used food packaging, and paper bags. Do not reuse packaging because it could contaminate other food and cause illness.
8. **C. 165°F** - When reheating in the microwave, cover and rotate the food for even heating. The food should reach 165°F when measured with a food thermometer. Be sure to use a microwave safe dish. Microwave friendly dishes include glass containers, ceramic dishes, and paper plates. Cook frozen convenience meals according to package instructions.

Sources:

- 4 Steps to Food Safety. Foodsafety.gov:
<https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/4-steps-to-food-safety>
- Get An A+ in Lunchbox Back-to-School Food Safety, United States Department of Agriculture:
<https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/blog/2025/08/19/get-lunchbox-back-school-food-safety>

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