

# LONG-TERM CARE HOME POLICY FOR FOOD BROUGHT INTO THE FACILITY BY VISITORS

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According to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's "[Recommendations for the Control of Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Homes](#)" document, all long-term care homes (LTCH) in Ontario should have a policy for food brought into the facility by visitors.

Visitors to a long-term care home may choose to bring in food for a resident from an outside source (e.g., from home or from a restaurant/caterer). The facility needs to ensure that food brought in is properly handled to prevent spreading food-borne illnesses to residents. A policy for food brought into the facility by visitors should include the information outlined below.

## Notification to staff

**Your policy should address the following:**

- Direct care staff need to be notified that food is being brought into the facility for a resident by a visitor
- Visitors must be clearly reminded not to offer food to other residents without the knowledge of direct care staff
- The name(s)/position(s) of facility staff who need to be notified when food is being brought into the facility

## Catered/restaurant food

**Your policy should address the following:**

- Any food from a caterer or restaurant brought into the facility by a visitor must be prepared at a premise that is inspected by Public Health
- To determine if the caterer or restaurant is inspected by Public Health:
  - For food premises in York Region, visit [york.ca/yorksafes](http://york.ca/yorksafes)
  - For food premises outside of York Region, contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 to obtain contact information for the health unit in the city/town where the food premise is located

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## Food prepared at home

### Your policy should address the following:

- Food prepared at home and brought into the facility should be prepared using the proper food handling practices to prevent food-borne illnesses. For information on proper food handling practices, refer visitors to [york.ca/foodsafety](http://york.ca/foodsafety)

## Transporting food to the facility

### Your policy should address the following:

- Proper procedures need to be followed when transporting food to the facility. These include:
  - Ensuring hot foods are maintained at a minimum temperature of 60°C or hotter (140°F) by transporting them in an insulated container
  - Ensuring cold foods are kept at a temperature of 4°C (40°F) or colder by transporting them in an insulated cooler packed with ice or ice packs
  - Ensuring all transport bags and containers are clean and in good repair

## Labelling food brought into the facility

### Your policy should address the following:

- All food brought into the facility for a resident must be clearly labeled
- The label should include:
  - Resident's name
  - Contents of the container(s); and
  - Date food was prepared

## Storing food at the facility

### Your policy should address the following:

- Staff must be made aware of any food that is to be stored at the facility for consumption by a resident at a later time to ensure it is stored safely
- Details on where the food is to be stored (e.g., not in the resident's room)
- Potentially hazardous foods\*:
  - Must be stored in a dedicated food fridge that is monitored for temperature
  - Must be kept away from any raw meat, poultry or seafood products that are stored in the same fridge
  - Must be stored in food-grade containers and/or wraps to minimize potential contamination
  - Any leftovers (food not consumed on the day it was prepared) should be used within two days of the original preparation date

*\*Potentially hazardous foods are those that support growth of infectious and/or toxigenic microorganisms because they are rich in protein, have high moisture content and a pH above 4.5. Examples include, but are not limited to: meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, dairy products (e.g., milk, cream cheese, yogurt), eggs and foods containing eggs as an ingredient (e.g., custards, salads), and cut up fruits and vegetables (ready-to-eat).*

# Reheating and serving leftovers at the facility

## Your policy should address the following:

- If visitors are reheating and serving leftovers to a resident:
  - Food needs to be reheated as quickly as possible
  - Foods such as soups, stews or gravies need to be brought to a boil before serving
  - Where possible, foods should be reheated in small amounts to speed up reheating
  - All unconsumed leftovers must be discarded
  - Potentially hazardous foods (including meats, fish, poultry, eggs and dairy items) left out for more than two hours must be discarded
  - Food should be reheated to a safe temperature. Ask visitors to refer to the Minimum Reheating Temperature Chart below for reheating guidelines
- Food reheated by facility staff should be temperature checked prior to being served to the resident. A temperature log should be kept.
- Minimum reheating temperatures for potentially hazardous food products are as follows:

Food Products	Minimum Reheating Temperature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ground poultry</li><li>• Poultry products</li><li>• Poultry pieces</li></ul>	74°C (165°F)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Food mixtures containing poultry, eggs, meat, fish or other hazardous food</li></ul>	74°C (165°F)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pork</li><li>• Pork product</li><li>• Ground meat other than ground poultry</li></ul>	71°C (160°F)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fish</li><li>• Beef</li><li>• Lamb</li><li>• Rice</li><li>• Seafood</li><li>• Other potentially hazardous food</li></ul>	70°C (158°F)

## Education to visitors

### Your policy should address the following:

- Facility must record the time, date and method of education sessions for visitors on bringing and storing food in the facility for residents

Reference: [Recommendations for the Control of Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Homes, Recommendations for Long-Term Care Homes and Public Health Unit Staff, March 2018](#)