



## CITY OF ST JOSEPH HEALTH DEPARTMENT TOTAL PREPARATION INFORMATION SERIES

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### FOOD SAFETY: AN ESSENTIAL PART OF YOUR ECLIPSE PLAN

Whether you are traveling to a solar eclipse viewing destination or hosting an eclipse viewing party at your home, there are many factors to consider with regard to food preparation to make the experience safe and enjoyable. Menu planning and preparation for a momentous occasion is a major accomplishment, but that food must be kept at the correct temperature and safe from contamination to ensure a food-borne illness does not over-shadow the experience! Follow these tips to make sure the food you serve is safe.

#### Cold Food:

- Items purchased from a grocer or convenience store cooler most typically should be kept refrigerated, with some exceptions being soda or bottled water that is simply chilled for convenience and preference.
- Refrigerated food should be stored at temperatures between 33-41°F until completely consumed.
- Frozen items should be stored at or below 32° F until consumed.
- Once fruit or vegetables have been cut into, they should be refrigerated for storage.
- Be diligent when noting the time food is served - Once cold or frozen food items are removed from cold storage, they must be consumed, refrigerated or discarded within 4 hours.
- Depending on the quantity of food to be kept cold or frozen, coolers with ice or ice packs may not be sufficient in extreme heat or for prolonged periods of time. For best results, put ice packs on top of food —cold air sinks. Also, chill food in advance, don't expect a cooler to do more than keep food cold.
- Pack food in multiple coolers for various uses. Use one cooler for drinks and uncut fruit snacks that can be opened more frequently because those items are cooled by preference. A separate cooler can be used to store meats, cheeses, and other foods that require refrigeration—this cooler stays closed, keeping it shut will keep it cool.

### Hot Food:

Raw food should be cooked thoroughly and reach the appropriate internal temperature prior to serving:

Chicken (poultry), all stuffed foods, reheated foods, microwaved foods 165°F

Ground meat, and sausage 160°F

Beef, veal, pork, seafood, lamb (minimally) 145°F

Holding cooked or reheated foods before and during service 135°F

Temperature danger zone, ideal for bacterial growth avoid 41-135°F

- Be diligent when noting the time food is served - Once cooked or reheated food items are served, they must be consumed, refrigerated or discarded within 4 hours.

### Preventing cross-contamination:

- Utensils or plates used to cut or serve raw meat cannot be used for any other purpose until sanitized.
- Potentially hazardous items such as meat, should be stored below, and well separated from, ready-to-eat items to prevent cross-contamination. This is true for food stored in a refrigerator or in a cooler.
- Surfaces that have been in contact with food should be cleaned and sanitized between food groups.
- Dirty hands spread disease. Wash them frequently, or minimally apply hand sanitizer when handling food – while cooking, serving, and cleaning up.

### Eclipse specific tips:

- If you will be purchasing food from a vendor or food establishment during the eclipse, be prepared for the possibility of longer than usual wait times. Consider having cash on hand to expedite the process.
- Plan ahead to stay well-hydrated. Water is simply the best beverage to consume to avoid dehydration. According to [www.OSHA.gov](http://www.OSHA.gov), persons' active when the heat index reaches 103-115°F should drink 4 cups of water every hour. Hopefully Mother Nature will be more cooperative, but staying hydrated will be important regardless of the temperature so please plan ahead and have an adequate amount of water for each person in your group.
- Plan for longer than usual travel times, with possible traffic delays, which will likely warrant additional food and water for each person traveling with you.

Some thoughtful preparation will help make a great memory of this once-in-a-lifetime experience!

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider*

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