

## Eating out

- Buy from food outlets that are clean, tidy and whose staff are neatly groomed and attired.
- Check that food vendors observe food safety practices.
- You can check out their hygiene grading (A, B, C, etc), which should be displayed at their outlets or stalls.
- Request that your hot food is served piping hot.
- Request for food to be thoroughly cooked.
- Food for take-away should be bought last, so as to keep the food hot.



# FOOD SAFETY IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

## Introduction

Food safety means that when food is consumed, it does not contain contaminants at levels which cause harm. All persons, whether they produce, manufacture, distribute, prepare or consume food, are part of the food chain. As such, the assurance of food safety is a shared responsibility which requires a multi-sectoral effort by governments, food industries and consumers.

## AVA is our food safety champion

AVA is the national authority for food safety in Singapore. AVA regulates the safety of both fresh produce and processed food, from production or point of import to just before they enter the retail chain.

AVA has put in place an integrated food safety system to ensure that food sold in Singapore is safe. Our food safety requirements are stringent and consistent with international standards.

The system involves checking of food produced at source, inspection of food, testing and analysis, and source tracing. It also includes surveillance and monitoring for food threats.

Its work never stops. AVA continuously scans the horizon for potential threats to food safety and updates its systems to tackle such problems.

## The role of the food industry and trade

The food industry is also responsible for the safety of the food it offers to consumers. Food manufacturers, importers and distributors in Singapore have to maintain a high standard of food safety by complying with the stringent requirements of AVA.

Responsible food industry players raise public confidence in their products by incorporating food safety assurance programmes and hygienic practices in their operations.

AVA also works closely with the food industry and trade to advise them on food safety issues.

## The role of consumers

Government authorities can exert some control over the quality and safety of food produced or imported through legislation and enforcement. However, formal control is not possible at the household level.

As a consumer, you have direct control over the safety of food prepared for yourself and your household. You can do this by equipping yourself with knowledge of food safety risks, and safe food practices to avoid the risks.

By taking appropriate actions, you can play a part in protecting your own well-being and the well-being of your family.

**TOGETHER, LET'S KEEP FOOD SAFE!**



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# Food Safety

# in School & at Work



# OBSERVE FOOD SAFETY IN SCHOOL

Food can be easily contaminated and become unsafe for eating. Food contamination may occur when cooked food is accidentally mixed with raw meat juices, or when food is exposed to dirt, chemicals, bacteria, viruses or other pathogens. This usually happens because we do not handle our food safely or observe proper hygiene.



Eating contaminated food can make us ill. We can get mild to severe food poisoning. We can help safeguard our personal health by taking more care in ensuring that the food we eat is safe.

## Measures that you can take

### Maintain personal hygiene


- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap.

When	Why?
Before you buy or touch food	Hands can be a medium for carrying micro-organisms to our food.
After touching pets and animals	Animals can carry diseases and germs which may be spread through our hands to our food.
After using the toilet	To avoid contamination of food by faecal bacteria.

### Bringing lunch to school

- Keep food clean.
- Make sandwiches ahead of time and refrigerate or freeze. Use an insulated lunch box or double bag to help insulate the sandwiches. If possible, put them into the refrigerator immediately. If not, keep them away in a cool place.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before packing them into the lunch box.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before you eat your lunch.

## Buying food from the school canteen

Tips	Why?
Buy from stalls that are clean and tidy, and check that food handlers are neatly groomed and attired.	Hygienic practices by food handlers and a clean environment help reduce the risk of food contamination.
Buy from vendors who use clean gloves when handling food. Check that they do not wear the same gloves to collect money	
Check that vendors separate raw food from cooked food	Cross-contamination of food can cause food poisoning.
Check that vendors serve hot food piping hot	Bacterial growth in food is optimum between 5°C to 60°C.
Check that the milk and snacks you buy are within their expiry dates	Food may become unsafe for consumption after its expiry date. Milk items spoil easily and once the packaging is damaged or opened, bacteria will grow rapidly.
Check that self-service refrigerators for cold food are cold, and there is no condensation on the food packets	Cold food must be kept cold.

## Practise good habits

Tips	Why?
Keep your water bottle capped after drinking	To prevent dust and other contaminants from entering your drinking water.
Wash your fruits before you eat	To remove dirt, pesticide residues or other contaminants which may be present in low levels.
Do not eat food you've dropped on the floor or canteen table	To avoid food contamination by dirt, bacteria or other contaminants that may be present on the floor or table.
Do not put your bag on the canteen tabletop	Your bag may be dirty and it may contaminate eating surfaces and consequently contaminate food.
Do not eat or drink in the school laboratory	The laboratory contains many chemicals which can make the food or drink unsafe.

# OBSERVE FOOD SAFETY AT WORK

## Eating in

- Always keep your mug or water container capped after drinking.
- Get rid of food and drink traces thoroughly after eating as smell of food will attract insects.
- Discard food that has dropped onto the table or floor.

Many offices have a pantry for use by their staff. Everyone who uses the pantry is responsible for keeping it clean.

## Keeping food in the pantry

- Keep foodstuff such as coffee, tea, powdered milk and biscuits in clean, air-tight containers, away from heat, light and moisture.
- Check food storage cupboards regularly to ensure that it is free from insect infestation or contamination.
- Clean up the insect infested storage area and food scraps and look for signs of the insects in the next 2 weeks.
- Discard foodstuff that has been left open, or if there are signs of insect infestation, or if it has passed its expiry date.
- Do not store food in the same cupboard with the photocopying chemicals, cleaning agents or insecticide to avoid chemical contamination of food.

## Keep the pantry clean and tidy

- Keep cupboards meant for food storage uncluttered and clean.
- Clean countertops and tables daily with detergent and water, and disinfect regularly.
- Change hand and dish towels daily. Damp towels promote bacterial growth.
- Dry kitchen utensils and containers thoroughly before putting them away.



## Using the microwave oven at work

- Follow the instructions on the packaging. When reheating cooked food, cover the food to hold in the moisture and promote safe, even heating.
- Reheat food till it is steaming hot before removing.
- Use only microwave-safe containers. Non-microwave proof containers may melt and cause chemical contamination to your food.

## Storing food in the pantry refrigerator

- Check that the refrigerator is cold and below 4°C.
- Do not keep dairy products or sushi in the door panel of the refrigerator as it is the warmest part of the refrigerator.
- If plastic bags or lunch bags are used to store cold food, double-bag the food to help insulate it.
- Check the refrigerator daily and throw out perishable food that is mouldy or that has passed its expiry date.