



## BRINGING FOOD INTO THE HOME

### *An information guide*

It's really nice to show you care by cooking special favourite meals for your family member within our Residential Home.

But if you do, you really wouldn't want to make them sick, so there are some things you need to know.

Our immune systems get weaker as we get older. Also our stomachs produce less acid which makes it easier for harmful germs to get through the digestive system and invade our bodies.

If elderly people do get food poisoning, they are also likely to suffer more severe consequences. These can range from mild dehydration to neuromuscular dysfunction or even death. Older people also take longer than most of us to recover from food poisoning.

There are some foods that pose a higher risk than others, particularly of passing on a Listeria infection which is dangerous for the elderly.

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**The elderly person may have special dietary requirements or restrictions of which you are unaware. Please check with the staff before providing food to an elderly resident.**

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Special acknowledgement to:



## What are the higher risk foods?

<b>Cold Meats</b>	Cooked or uncooked, packaged or unpackaged e.g. Roast beef, ham etc.
<b>Cold cooked chicken</b>	Purchased whole, portions, sliced or diced
<b>Pate</b>	Refrigerated pate, liverwurst or meat spreads
<b>Chilled seafood</b>	Pre-prepared or pre-packaged fruit, vegetables or salads e.g. from salad bars, retail outlets etc.
<b>cheese</b>	Prepackaged and delicatessen soft, semi soft and surface ripened cheeses e.g. brie, camembert, ricotta, feta and blue
<b>Ice-cream</b>	Soft serve
<b>Other dairy products</b>	Unpasteurized dairy products e.g. raw goats milk, cheese or yoghurt made from raw milk

Food made with raw egg such as homemade egg mayonnaise, hollandaise sauce, uncooked cakes and desserts and egg-nog can also be dangerous for the elderly.

**YOU SHOULD NOT PROVIDE THESE FOODS TO AN ELDERLY RESIDENT**

## What precautions should I take when preparing foods?

There are no special rules for cooking for elderly people — you just need to be even fussier than normal. If you plan to take chilled or frozen food you have cooked yourself, make sure that the food is cooled quickly in your refrigerator; never at room temperature.

Always wash your hands well under running water using soap and dry thoroughly before handling food. You can get information on preparing food safely from the fact sheet 'Protecting Tiny Tummies and Sensitive Systems' and other fact sheets on the Food Safety Information Council website, [www.foodsafety.asn.au](http://www.foodsafety.asn.au).

## How can I transport food safely for an elderly person?

When transporting your food to Corumbene you will need to take care that it is protected from contamination during transport. You will need to ensure that chilled food is kept cool and hot food is kept hot during your journey.

Between 5°C and 60°C degrees is known as the **temperature danger zone** because harmful bacteria multiply to dangerous levels in food when it is kept between these temperatures.

- Put cold food into a cooler with ice packs when travelling to visit your relative or friend.
- Don't pack food if it has just been cooked and is still warm.
- Coolers cannot cool food; they can only keep cold food cool.



**Food should be kept at 5° C or cooler. For hot food, at 60° C or hotter.**

Always cover pre-prepared foods securely and pre-chill them; for example, keep in the refrigerator overnight. Other perishable foods and drinks must also be cold when put in the cooler.

Hot food is difficult to keep hot and is best avoided if you are travelling long distances. It is best to chill the food overnight and reheat it at the residence. If you must take hot food on a longer journey, an insulated jug preheated with boiling water before being filled with the steaming hot food can be used. If you are unsure whether the jug will keep the food above 60°C, try filling it with water at 90°C, seal and test the water temperature after the length of time you expect your journey to take. If it is still above 60°C then you can use the jug. You will need a food thermometer to do this test. If any perishable food you bring is not eaten immediately, make sure it is refrigerated before you leave.

### Reheating food

Please be aware that Corumbene Staff are unable to reheat food on your behalf. This must be done by yourself or individually by the Resident.

There are several microwave ovens available in the facility for this purpose. Please ask the staff to point you to their location.

**Food needs to be reheated to a minimum of 75°C to kill any bacteria or viruses that might be present in the food\***

*\*Some foods may be ruined when heated to this temperature. Consider this in your food choice.*

## Storage of the food you bring in:

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When you bring food into Corumbene Care for a relative or friend, it is you and not the staff who is responsible for its safety.

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Home cooked shelf stable foods like cakes, biscuits and chocolates may be stored in the Residents room however perishable food such as cold meats, custard or cream filled cakes, cooked vegetables and meat dishes should be discarded as Corumbene is unable to store this food nor take responsibility for its safety

Leaving perishable food in the temperature danger zone for too long before eating can result in food borne illness. Food which can cause food poisoning may not look or taste spoiled. Sometimes elderly people can also forget how long the food has been there.

If you bring commercially 'ready to eat food' (such as chips, yoghurt tubs,, make sure the elderly person is aware of any 'best before' or 'use by' date on the food and that they are stored appropriately. Appropriate storage means that they are clearly labelled with the person's name and stored in either the Country Kitchen fridge or the Residents personal fridge (if they have one).



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If you have any questions or concerns about bringing food in for your family member or friend please see the Nurse in Charge or contact us on:

(03) 6261 2744

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