

Bulletin: Put Bacteria in the Penalty Box

Community sports take place in many different environments, like hot soccer fields or humid baseball diamonds. Bacteria can thrive in these hot conditions. You can't see, smell, or taste bacteria, but it lives on foods that are not handled or stored properly. Bacteria may cause illness and can take the fun out of any game.

It is important to refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods and leftovers within two hours or less. Keeping food cold (at or below 4°C/40°F) slows down bacterial growth.

Your defense includes:

- Clean hands before handling food - wash with warm water and soap for 30 seconds.
- If running water is not available, have kids use hand sanitizer (60% alcohol or more) before eating.
- Clean surfaces and clean utensils when preparing food.
- Clean containers that are used to store snacks.
- Keep cold foods cold - pack snacks in an air tight container and use ice packs.

Good to Know... All fresh fruit should be rinsed thoroughly before serving. This includes fruit that have non-edible skins such as cantaloupe wedges or orange slices. Slicing can move bacteria from the surface of the fruit to the part that we eat. Once cut, fruit should be kept cold.

