



**Forest County Office on Aging  
Policies and Procedures**

Policy Title	<b>Carry Out Meals</b>		Approved
Committee Approved on:	02/11/2020	Effective:	02/11/2020
Training Required:	yes	GWAAR Approval:	02/14/2020
Date of Review:	Policy to be reviewed on annual basis with staff	Corp Counsel approval:	01/27/2020

**PURPOSE:** To establish a formal policy and procedure for allowing a small number of meals as “carryout.” Carryout meals are not allowed as a regular practice for various reasons, the main one being that socialization is vital to the well-being of older adults and we highly value the Senior Dining Program. We realize that there are exceptional cases when neither congregate or home-delivered meals will meet individuals’ immediate needs and a carryout meal is appropriate.

**PURPOSE OF NUTRITION PROGRAM:**

- To reduce hunger and food insecurity
- To promote socialization of older adults
- To promote the health and well-being of older individuals by assisting such individuals to gain access to nutrition and other disease prevention and health promotion services to delay the onset of adverse healthy conditions resulting from poor nutritional health or sedentary behavior.

**POLICY:** Carry out meals are allowed if the following conditions have been met:

1. The meals must be served to a registered program participant.
2. Instances when a carryout meal may be appropriate include:
  - a. A significant other, family member, roommate, close neighbor or other designee can safely deliver a meal to a regular congregate participant who has an acute illness or condition. When the duration exceeds two-weeks, the participant must be evaluated for home delivered meals.
  - b. A significant other, family member, roommate, close neighbor or other designee can safely deliver a meal to a participant who qualifies for a home-delivered meal. When done appropriately, this could be a means of reserving program resources.
  - c. A participant may take a meal home with them for that day or the following day if they have a medical appointment that is scheduled during the time the dining center is serving.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. The participant and/or the person taking the meal must be instructed on meal serving times and the policy for reserving a meal shall be observed.

2. The participant and/or the person taking the meal should arrive at the meal site to pick up their meal during the posted serving times.
3. No china, cups, or utensils shall be removed from the dining center. The carryout meal shall be packaged in a safe and suitable take-out container and the procedure for returning trays, storage containers, etc. if applicable should be explained.
4. Participant should be encouraged to bring a cooler, if possible, to assure the meal stays out of the temperature danger zone. Note: It is not requirement that they bring a cooler; it is just a strong recommendation. A meal shall NOT be denied if they do not have a cooler.
5. Encourage the participant and/or the person taking the meal to go directly home or deliver the meal to the participant immediately. The meal should be eaten immediately. If the meal cannot be eaten within two hours, perishable items should be put into the refrigerator or freezer. Cooked food should never be kept at room temperature for more than two hours. When temperatures are above 90° F (32° C), discard food after one hour!
6. The participant/person picking up the meal must be instructed on food safety guidelines for the meal and written food safety instructions should accompany the meal.
7. The Dining Site Manager or other staff in charge of releasing the meal has the responsibility to educate the participant and/or person picking up the meal on safe food handling. The following handouts shall be provided:
  - a. **Food Safety on the Go** (with first carry out meal)
  - b. **Carryout Meal Food Safety Guidelines-Tips for Transporting Food Safely** (with first carryout meal)
  - c. **Carryout Meal Food Safety Guidelines** (half page handout) or Keep Your Meal Safe label (with every meal)
8. Once the person picking up the meal has been instructed on safe food handling, both the individual and the nutrition program staff providing the education shall sign the **Carryout Meal Acknowledgement of Food Safety Education** form acknowledging they have received instruction and accept responsibility of the meal. This form shall be retained by the nutrition program.
9. The safety of food after it has been served to the participant and when it has been removed from the dining center is the responsibility of the participant and/or the person picking up the meal.
10. The Dining Site Manager or other staff in charge of releasing the meal has the responsibility and authority not to send the meal if they feel it cannot or will not be delivered safely. If this occurs the dining site Manager should contact the Aging Director so other arrangements can be made.
11. Carryout meals will be reported as congregate meals unless the individual has had a full in-home assessment for home delivered meals.
12. The carryout meal must comply with the same standards as the congregate and home-delivered meals.

**REFERENCES:**

Wisconsin Policy and Procedure Manual for the Wisconsin Aging Network  
**Section 8.4.25 Carryout Meals.**

**Acknowledgement of Carryout Meal Policy by Nutrition Staff**

This policy has been reviewed with me by my Supervisor on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_  
and I acknowledge receipt of this policy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nutrition Staff/Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Aging Director

# Food Safety-To-Go

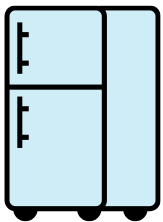
It is important to remember that whether the food is hot or cold, most of it is perishable. Perishable foods can cause illness when mishandled. To keep hot foods safe, keep them at 140 °F or above. Cold foods must be kept at 40 °F or below.

- Harmful bacteria can grow rapidly in the “temperature danger zone” (between 40°F & 140°F). The United States Department of Agriculture suggests the 2-hour rule.
- The foods you take home should not be in the temperature danger zone for more than two hours.

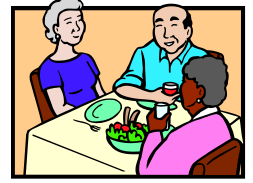


## Meals Picked-Up or Delivered Hot

- Once food is cooked, it must be held hot, at an internal temperature of 140 °F or above. If eating within two hours, pick up or receive the food hot, keep it hot & enjoy eating...within two hours.
- If food will not be eaten immediately, but will be eaten within two hours, you can keep it hot by placing it in a hot oven. Set your oven temperature high enough to keep the food at 140 °F or above. Check the internal temperature of food with a meat or instant-read thermometer. Cover the food with foil to help keep it moist. Remember to refrigerate the cold portion of the meal!
- If food will be eaten much later, refrigerate immediately. When reheating, make sure the food reaches an internal temperature of 165 °F. Reheating in slow cookers and chafing dishes is NOT recommended because foods may stay in the "temperature danger zone" (between 40 and 140 °F) too long. When reheating food in the microwave oven, cover and rotate food for even heating. Do not reheat in Styrofoam & plastic containers!
- Some containers are very good “insulators” & the food inside may not cool down as quickly as it would in another type of container. To cool food quickly, make sure the food is no more than two inches deep. Open the container slightly to allow the cold air to get ins



## Dining Site Leftovers



- Time is a consideration in keeping meal site leftovers safe. You should take leftovers only if you are going home right after you eat. Be sure to take the food home in clean containers specifically designed for leftovers...empty margarine or Cool Whip containers are not suggested.
  - Also, be sure to take the food home in a cooler with an ice pack.
- Discard all perishable foods such as meat, poultry, eggs, and casseroles, left at room temperature longer than 2 hours. If air temperatures are above 90 °F, food should be discarded after one hour! This includes leftovers taken home from the dining site. Some exceptions to this rule are foods such as cookies, crackers, bread, and whole fruits.
- WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT! The cost of a trip to the doctor's office is going to be much more than the cost of the food you discard!
- If the food is not safe for you to eat, **don't give it to your pet.** Again, the expense of a visit to the veterinarian is going to be much more than the cost of the food you discard.



**For more information about food safety,  
contact your local Cooperative Extension Center  
or check out the following resources:**

- USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline: 1-800-535-4555, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday
- Meat and Poultry Hotline e-mail: [mph hotline.fsis@usda.gov](mailto:mph hotline.fsis@usda.gov)
- Consumer information about food safety from USDA: [www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/consedu.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/consedu.htm) than the cost of the food you discard.

Handout courtesy of Amy Ramsey, MS, RD, CSG, CD, Nutrition/Prevention Specialist  
at The Department of Health Services- Bureau of Aging & Disability Resources.

## Acknowledgement of Food Safety Education for Carry Out Meals

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received instruction and accept responsibility of the meals that I carry out of the Dining Site Center. I acknowledge that the Forest County Nutrition Program nor their staff are responsible for the meal once it has been removed from the Dining Site Center.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant/person receiving meal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Forest County Nutrition Program Staff

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date