

Food From Home

Guidelines for Preparation, Handling and Purchasing Food Items for Stem Cell Transplant Patients

Transplant patients are on a special diet throughout the transplant admission. The transplant dietitian will provide further information upon admission and again at discharge from the hospital.

Transplant patients may eat food brought in from the outside if the following guidelines are met:

Food Preparation

- Always wash your hands and any surface the food will touch before handling food. If you are handling raw meat you must wash your hands after handling the meat and before touching any other food substance.
- If a plate, cutting board, or utensil was used for pre-cooked food, do not use again for cooked food.
- Use separate cutting boards for meats and vegetables.
- Do not thaw food at room temperature. Thaw frozen foods appropriately as follows:
 - a. In the refrigerator OR
 - b. In the microwave on the defrost setting OR
 - c. By running cold water continuously over meat until thawed
- Cook foods thoroughly. Fresh vegetables must be cooked; do not eat them raw. Only fresh fruits with a thick peel (ex. Oranges, bananas) are allowed in the hospital. Canned and cooked fruit sauces are allowed. Meats should be cooked until well done.

- Seasoning (ex. pepper, herbs, spices) may be added PRIOR to cooking. Only salt may be added AFTER cooking.
- Portion food into individual servings in tightly sealed containers and cool in the refrigerator or freezer prior to transporting to the hospital.
- Do not leave food in a large cooking pot or let it cool on the counter, this leaves food in the “danger zone” temperature of 40 to 140 degrees which is prime temperature for bacteria to grow.

Food From a Restaurant or Grocery Store:

If purchasing food from a restaurant or the cafeteria, follow these guidelines:

- Check “sell by” and “use by” dates and do not buy items that are out of date
- Do not buy any damaged, bulging, or deeply dented cans
- Make sure that frozen foods feel solid and refrigerated foods are cold
- Store groceries promptly after shopping
- Do not buy bulk foods from self-service bins
- Avoid lunch meats from a delicatessen. Prepackaged ham and turkey slices are OK. Avoid bologna, salami, olive loaf.
- Avoid cold deli salads, salad bars or smorgasbords.
- Avoid fountain pop/soda, milkshakes, frosties, frozen yogurt or soft serve ice cream from bulk serving machines.
- Avoid unpasteurized and gently pasteurized honey, cider or juices
- Avoid unpasteurized milk or dairy products. Pasteurized milk and dairy products, including yogurt, are acceptable.
- Avoid aged cheeses or cheeses with molds (brie, Camembert, bleu, Roquefort, stilton, gorgonzola, feta, farmer’s cheese).

- Avoid raw nuts. Roasted nuts without shells are acceptable (i.e. roasted peanuts)
- Avoid raw or undercooked meats, poultry, fish and shellfish. Well-cooked meats, poultry, fish and shellfish are acceptable.
- Avoid cold cereals containing raisins or other dried fruits
- Avoid selecting an item that has been held in a food warmer. Request that the item be freshly prepared.
- Request the item be prepared without condiments (i.e. ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and tarter sauce). Ask for individual packages instead.
- Request that sandwiches be prepared without lettuce, tomatoes and raw onions.
- Bakery items with cream and custard fillings as well as baked custard, are only allowed if they have been refrigerated, or are fresh out of the oven. Shelf stable bakery items (Twinkees, King Dongs) are allowed.

Transporting Food to the Unit:

- Transport refrigerated or frozen food items in a cooler with ice
- If food is brought freshly made from home or from a restaurant and transportation time is LESS than 10 minutes, no cooler or ice is necessary. If transportation will take LONGER than 10 minutes, the food should be thoroughly cooled in the refrigerator or frozen and then placed on ice in a cooler for transport to the unit.

Food Storage and Preparation ON the Unit:

- Food should be placed in the BMT refrigerator and labeled with the patient's last name and the date.
- Food should be re-heated in the microwave until hot (steaming) and promptly eaten.

This document is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Our aim is to promote active participation in your care and treatment by providing information and education. Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options should be discussed with your physician.

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