

Guidelines for bringing occasional food or drinks in for patients

CAN I BRING FOOD IN FOR A PATIENT?

Yes, as long as it is safe (see list below) and the patient is not on a special diet or experiencing swallowing problems. For patients on a special diet, with cultural or religious needs or with swallowing difficulties, please check with the Dietitian. Family and friends sometimes bring in food as a treat for patients to supplement the hospital menu. Please bring food items into hospital in a disposable container.

WHAT FOOD IS SAFE TO BRING FOR PATIENTS?

For patients on a normal diet you can bring:

- Pretzels, potato chips, dry biscuits
- Muesli bars, sweet biscuits
- Fresh and dried fruit
- Bread, bread sticks, bagels, unleavened bread
- Muffins, cakes, scones, pikelets (no cream)
- Boiled lollies, liquorice, mints, chocolates, drinks (e.g. soft drinks, non-alcoholic beverages)



WHAT FOOD IS POTENTIALLY UNSAFE TO BRING FOR PATIENTS?

These food items bought in for a patient should be consumed immediately or discarded:

- Any food that can spoil if not refrigerated
- Raw or under-cooked/pre-cooked meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, oysters
- Rice and pasta dishes, including sushi, casseroles, soups
- Soft cheeses, deli meats, pates, dips, milk
- Salads and other items containing dairy products or creamy dressings e.g. coleslaw, potato salad
- Sweet dishes containing cream or custard, soft serve ice cream and frozen yoghurt
- Sandwiches with potentially hazardous food e.g. meat, fish, poultry, cheese
- Takeaway foods; including foods delivered by food delivery companies



**ST VINCENT'S
PRIVATE HOSPITAL**
SYDNEY

CONDUCTED BY THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF AUSTRALIA

STORAGE AND RE-HEATING OF FOOD

NOTE: St Vincent's Private Hospital does not accept responsibility for food prepared externally that is given to patients by family and friends.

If potentially unsafe foods are bought in for a patient, that food should be consumed immediately and not stored. Hot foods should be re-heated in a microwave until steaming hot throughout – nursing staff can assist.

All foods bought in for a patient that is on the "safe foods list" should be stored in an airtight container.

Fridges provided in patient rooms are for drinks only and not for storing potentially unsafe foods.

WHAT IS FOOD POISONING?

Food poisoning is caused by eating food that contains harmful levels of disease-causing bacteria or toxins. It can have serious and unpleasant effects. Food can become dangerous if it is not handled safely during:

- all stages of preparation
- cooking
- storage
- transportation
- serving

The symptoms of food poisoning vary but usually include one or more of the following: cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever and headaches.

Food poisoning can be very serious for patients recovering from illness or an operation, therefore St Vincent's Private Hospital has guidelines about what food can and cannot be brought in. The lists of SAFE and UNSAFE foods are used to help prevent food poisoning only. The lists do not reflect any specific diets because of a patient's medical condition. Please talk to the Dietitian for further information.

WHY DOES ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE HOSPITAL HAVE TO BE SO STRICT?

The Hospital is committed to providing a safe environment for patients and must comply with the Australian Food Safety Standards and the NSW Food Act 2003.

All St Vincent's Private Hospital facilities are regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with these laws, regulations and standards.

The immune system of many patients in hospital are considerably lower than those not in hospital. Food which is left in an uncontrolled temperature range for more than four hours is dangerous and needs to be discarded as it may cause serious food poisoning.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Please contact Hospital Food Services on (02) 8382 7387

Food Standards Australia New Zealand
www.foodstandards.gov.au

NSW Food Authority
www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au