

Food hygiene at Cobweb events



A highlight of many Cobweb events is a "bring and share" meal.

We want to continue to enjoy these, but to do so safely we need to observe a few important principles of food hygiene. When we serve a shared meal the Cobweb organisation is effectively supplying food to those who attend, and the organisation therefore has a responsibility to minimise the risk of allowing an episode of food borne illness to occur. Everyone who enrolls for an event including a shared meal should be made aware of these guidelines.

All food should be prepared and handled with care, but the danger lies mainly in high protein foods, in which bacteria can multiply rapidly at temperatures above 8°C. These foods are known as high risk foods. The main high risk foods are:

- Meat and poultry including products such as spreads, sausages and pork pies.
- Milk, eggs and lightly cooked products such as mayonnaise.
- Shellfish and seafood.
- Rice.

Cobweb events carry particular risks because:

- Food may spend a considerable time in transit, owing to travelling a long distance.
- There may be a few hours between food arriving at the venue and being eaten.
- Many venues do not have fridges.
- There may be a temptation to eat "left-overs" at the end of the day before a long journey home.

The following guidelines should be followed by everyone:

- At home, keep all high risk food in the fridge until you are about to leave.
- Transport high risk food in a cool box or bag with a generous quantity of ice packs.
- On arrival at the venue, transfer high risk food to a fridge if available. Otherwise leave food in its cool box / bag until it is time to eat.
- Do not leave high risk foods at room temperature for more than 4 hours. After 4 hours discard any remaining food.
- Cover all food (not just high risk) until it is time to eat, to prevent contamination.
- Do not bring food to share if you are suffering from an illness with vomiting or diarrhoea.

Further advice is available here:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/food-hygiene/charity-community-groups>