

Low-risk home-prepared food: fact sheet for operators

Home-prepared foods

As of June 1, 2020, a new section of Alberta's [Food Regulation](#) enables Albertans to sell low-risk home-prepared foods from their home or at special events, such as craft fairs and festivals. Operators will not require a permit, commercial kitchen or routine inspection to sell low-risk home-prepared foods.

Home-prepared foods, including those sold at farmers' markets, will need to be clearly and appropriately labelled so consumers can make informed choices. Vendors at farmers' markets selling home-prepared foods will be asked to comply with the new labelling requirements, in addition to existing farmers' markets guidelines.

Rules to support a new industry

As of June 1, 2020, the Food Regulation includes a new section that establishes rules for operators selling low-risk home-prepared foods, including:

- Food must be low risk (see page 3 for examples).
- Food and ingredients must be obtained from sources that are subject to inspection, if applicable. This means that you can get fresh fruits and vegetables from the grower, as these do not require inspection, but you cannot use other people's home-prepared foods, such as jam, as ingredients in your home-prepared food.
- Water used to prepare food must be safe to drink. If your home is on a municipal water system, you can use your tap water. If you are on a private water system, visit [Alberta](#)

[Health Services](#)

for information on having your water tested.

- Food must be protected from contamination. Safe food handling tips and links to educational resources are included below.
 - Home-prepared foods must be labelled with:
 - A statement similar to 'prepared in a home kitchen that is not subject to inspection'
 - A statement similar to 'not for resale'
 - Your name, your business name, your email and/or phone number
 - The name of the food and the date it was made or prepared
- Note: Labels must be legible and can be a tag, sticker or card provided with the product. Whole fresh fruits and vegetables do not need to be labelled.
- Low-risk home-prepared food can only be prepared by the operator and/or members of the operator's household. Individuals who are not members of the operator's household may sell the food on behalf of the operator at special events to allow operators

What is low-risk?

Low-risk foods present a low risk of foodborne illness and do not require refrigeration. (see page 3 for examples). Meat, poultry, seafood, raw milk and home-bottled water are not allowed.

to participate in multiple events taking place at the same time.

- No onsite dining is allowed at the operator's home, but free samples can be provided for immediate consumption.
- Foods sold at special events must be packaged at home and sold in that same packaging. However, free samples can be provided.
- At a special event, the operator and/or any assistants are not allowed to sell foods other than the operator's low-risk home-prepared foods.
- Do not prepare or sell food if prohibited under the [Communicable diseases Regulation](#).

Safe food handling

Any food made available to the public must be safe to eat. Operators are required follow the steps below to ensure home-prepared foods are prepared properly and kept safe until sold.

Protecting food from contamination

- Use quality ingredients (not spoiled) and keep ingredients that require refrigeration cold.
- Keep food and ingredients covered while stored, displayed or transported and do not let customers handle unpackaged/bulk food.
- Keep raw ingredients and prepared food separate and keep food for your business separate from your personal food to avoid cross-contamination with high-risk foods and allergens.
- Package and label food in your kitchen to protect the food and keep track of when it was made. If it becomes spoiled or contaminated, do not sell it.
- Use only containers, utensils and equipment that are designed to be used with food.



Setting up your kitchen for safe food handling

- Keep your kitchen, storage areas and the vehicle you will use to transport food clean and in good repair.
- Surfaces that will be in contact with food, such as counters, cutting boards and



utensils, should be smooth and non-absorbent for easy cleaning and sanitizing.

- Wash, rinse and sanitize surfaces and utensils before and after each use.
- Put garbage in covered containers and empty them regularly.
- Cover all containers, including any openings to the outside to prevent entry of pests.

Food handler hygiene

- Keep small children, ill family members and pets out of the kitchen while preparing food.
- Don't prepare food if you are ill.
- Wash your hands with soap and hot water and lather for 20 seconds before handling food and after any activity that may make them dirty (e.g. taking a break, snacking, smoking, handling raw ingredients or other food, using the washroom).
- Wear clean clothing, cover your hair and don't smoke or eat while preparing food.



Providing samples safely

- Prepare individual portions at home and keep them in a covered container.
- All food samples must be protected from contamination and improper handling by customers. Serve only pre-wrapped samples or use tongs to serve them.
- Bring extra tongs so you can change them regularly.
- If you do not have access to soap and hot water for hand washing at the special event or approved market, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Education

Operators are strongly encouraged to take food safety training to learn about safe food handling practices. Available resources include:

- [Alberta Health Services](#) offers free online courses and printable home study booklets. The home study and online farmers' market courses include information on home-canning
- [Recognized food safety courses](#) that issue certificates approved under the Food Regulation

Keep in mind

Although low-risk home-prepared food businesses will not require a permit or be subject to routine inspection by Alberta Health Services, inspections may take place as a follow-up to a food safety concern such as an outbreak or complaints of unsafe practices.

This document describes the rules for operators established at the provincial level. Operators are also required to comply with all applicable federal and municipal rules and guidelines. For federal rules, visit the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#). For business licensing and zoning guidelines at the local level, contact your municipality.

Contact

If you have any questions about the rules for starting a low-risk home-prepared food business or about food safety, please contact Alberta Health Services:

Phone: 780-342-2000

Toll free: 1-888-342-2471

Online:

<https://ephisahs.albertahealthservices.ca/create-case/>

Low-Risk Foods

The table below provides the types of foods that are low risk with examples. Foods that require refrigeration are not low-risk. In addition, **low-risk home-prepared foods cannot contain meat, poultry, seafood, uninspected eggs or raw milk**; they may contain eggs or dairy that are fully cooked in the final product (e.g. baked in a cake).

Types of low-risk foods	Examples
Baked Goods*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bread and buns • brownies, pastries • cakes and cookies • muffins, biscuits, tortillas • fruit pies, pastries • waffle cones and pizzelles • fried or baked donuts and waffles, churros
Sweets/snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chocolate, hard candy • fudge, toffee • popcorn, vegetable and potato chips • carob • brittle • chocolate covered non-perishable foods (nuts, dried fruit) • cotton candy • candied apples
Dry foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dried fruits and vegetables • dry cereal products and grain mixes • noodles (no egg based) • coffee beans and tea leaves • spices and seasoning salt • dried herbs • granola, trail mix, nuts & seeds • dry baking mixes and soup mixes
Condiments/ingredients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • honey • syrup • wine and herb vinegar • nut butter
Fresh produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole fresh fruit and vegetables • microgreens†
Foods with controlled properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jam and jelly (pH 4.6 or lower or water activity of 0.85 or lower) • pickled vegetables (vinegar base, pH 4.6 or lower) • relish (vinegar base, pH 4.6 or lower) • salsa (if pH or water activity within acceptable ranges. If whole or cut tomatoes are used as an ingredient, then the pH of the final product must be lower than 4.2) • fruit butter (pH 4.6 or lower)

*baked goods *must not* contain any meat, dairy, cheese or meringue fillings; only sugar icing and buttercream that does not contain eggs, cream or cream cheese are permitted.

†harvested at the first true leaf stage and sold with the stem, cotyledons [seed leaves], and first true leaves attached