

The Joy of Giving Food Safely

You eagerly rip open the shiny, gift-wrapped box you received in the mail. As you peer into the present, you gasp! The sticker says, "Keep Refrigerated" — but the delicacy inside feels like it's at room temperature! Oh, no!



How can you be sure that food survives holiday shipping? It's all in the planning.

Follow these handy tips.

MAILING

a Perishable Food Gift . . .

- Make sure the food is frozen solid or refrigerator cold.
- Use an insulated cooler or a heavy corrugated box packed with a frozen gel-pack, or purchase dry ice for keeping food cold.
- Alert the recipient and arrange a mutually-agreeable delivery date.
- Properly label the package "Perishable — Keep Refrigerated" on the outside, and provide a complete mailing address and phone number to ensure proper delivery.
- Ship your package by overnight delivery.

Note: Don't send food to someone's workplace. The food could be accidentally left at the office or in the trunk of a car. It's safer to send food directly to the home, but make sure that someone will be home to receive the "surprise."

Tips for

MAIL-ORDER FOOD GIFTS

When ordering food gifts through the mail, transit time *and* a cold source are key! Be sure to specify overnight delivery, and request that the company supply a frozen gel-pack or dry ice in the packaging. This will help guarantee that the food will arrive still firm and refrigerator cold.



Happy Holidays!

RECEIVING

a Perishable Food Gift . . .

- Open the package upon arrival.
- Make sure the food is still refrigerator cold.
- Immediately refrigerate or freeze the food.

Note: Perishable food must arrive cold to be safe. If it is not cold, do not eat it, and notify the shipper. Remember, it's the shipper's responsibility to deliver perishable foods on time, but it's the customer's responsibility to have someone at home to receive the package.

Remember to practice food safety this season!

If you have questions or concerns about food safety during the holiday season, contact:

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Meat and Poultry Hotline at (800) 535-4555 or (202) 720-3333 (Washington, DC area). The TTY number for the hearing impaired is (800) 256-7072
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration Food Information Line at (888) SAFE FOOD
- The Fight BAC! Web site at: www.fightbac.org

