

# Food packaging

If you're a food business, it's important to know what types of packaging are safe to use with your food products.



SAFE FOOD AUSTRALIA  
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## What are the requirements?

Under [Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements](#), food businesses must:

- only use packaging material that is fit for its intended purpose
- only use material that is not likely to cause food contamination
- ensure there is no likelihood that the food may become contaminated during the packaging process.

## What are the risks?

Packaging can potentially make food unsafe or unsuitable, for example if:

- something contaminates food during the packaging process
- harmful microorganisms get into food from dirty or damaged packaging
- parts of the packaging break off into food (e.g. glass or plastic fragments)
- chemicals leach from packaging into food.

## Chemicals in food packaging

Chemicals can leach from some food packaging under certain conditions. Things that can affect leaching into food include:

- whether the packaging has direct or indirect contact with food
- type of food (e.g. some packaging is unsuitable for oily or acidic foods)
- storage conditions (e.g. time, temperature, humidity)
- whether the food will be microwaved or heated in the packaging
- cleaning and sanitising the packaging for reuse
- use of recycled materials for packaging.

The [Chemicals in food packaging](#) web page at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au) has further information.

## Reduce your risk

Choose the right packaging:

- only use clean, undamaged, food-safe packaging
- buy from a reputable source
- know the composition of your food and check the packaging is suitable (ask the supplier or manufacturer for assurance or certification that the material is food-safe)
- check manufacturer's instructions or symbols to confirm the packaging can take the conditions it will be exposed to, such as freezing, microwaving, or use in dishwashers

Use packaging correctly:

- handle with good hygienic practices
- store in a secure and clean place
- consider how long and where food will be stored in the packaging and check it will stay safe under those conditions
- use appropriate cleaning and sanitising methods
- only reuse packaging or other materials if safe for food (e.g. don't repeatedly use packaging designed for single use)
- consider using a food-safe inner liner if there's a risk of chemicals leaching into food.

## Need more information?

[Safe Food Australia](#) is a guide to the food safety standards in Chapter 3 of the Food Standards Code. Food packaging is under Standard 3.2.2 clause 9.

Copies of the guide, some translated fact sheets and other information is available at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au) or by emailing [information@foodstandards.gov.au](mailto:information@foodstandards.gov.au)