



Health and  
Wellness

Santé et  
Mieux-être



PO Box 2000, Charlottetown  
Prince Edward Island  
Canada C1A 7N8

C.P. 2000, Charlottetown  
Île-du-Prince-Édouard  
Canada C1A 7N8

## Classification of Low vs. High Risk Foods

The following document defines low risk food and potentially hazardous (high risk) food and provides a list of examples in each category.

**Low Risk Food:** food that is unlikely to contain disease causing microorganisms or their toxins or will not support the growth of disease causing microorganisms or the production of toxins. One or more of the following factors generally apply to most low risk foods:

- Water activity ( $A_w$ ) of 0.85 or less, or
- A pH (Hydrogen ion concentration) value of 4.6 or less.

**Potentially hazardous food (high risk food):** food in a form or state which is capable of supporting growth of disease causing microorganisms, or the production of toxins.

There can be occasions that a food, even with a pH and/or a water activity ( $A_w$ ) as described above for low risk foods, may still be considered a potentially hazardous food due to the source of the food, how it is processed, and/or some other mitigating risk factors.

### Low Risk Foods

The following list contains examples of **low risk** foods:

- apple sauce
- bread and buns (no dairy or cheese fillings)
- brownies
- butter tarts
- cakes (icing sugar only, no dairy or synthetic whipped cream [e.g., “Cool Whip” or similar])
- dry cereal products

- chocolate/carob or raw chocolate/carob (provided it is used for re-melted or re-molded products only and (1) not purchased from bulk bins; (2) sourced from a chocolate manufacturer that can provide a certificate of assurance that chocolate is free from Salmonella)
- cinnamon buns (sugar icing only)
- cookies
- dried fruits
- fresh unprocessed fruits and vegetables
- fudge
- hard candy
- honey
- jam and jelly (pH 4.6 or less or aw of 0.85 or less)
- muffins (no dairy fillings)
- noodles (dry flour and water only, no egg based)
- pickled vegetables (vinegar base, pH 4.6 or less)
- pies (fruit filled only, no cream filled, cream based or custard meringues)
- popcorn
- relish (vinegar base, pH 4.6 or less)
- salsa (if pH and Aw within acceptable ranges and the food contains no animal protein. If whole or cut tomatoes are used as an ingredient, then the pH of the final product must be less than 4.2.)
- syrup
- toffee
- wine and herb vinegar

For products not listed above, please consult Environmental Health.

## Potentially Hazardous (High Risk) Foods

The following list contains examples of potentially hazardous (**high risk**) food:

- antipasto
- cabbage rolls
- cakes/pastries with whipped cream/cheese fillings
- chop suey
- creamed corn
- dairy products (e.g. milk, cream, cheese, yogurt)
- fermented foods (any food that relies on the growth of micro-organisms to produce alcoholic, acidic or alkaline conditions necessary for fermentation)
- fish and shellfish
- foods containing eggs as ingredients (e.g. custards, salads)
- garlic spreads, pesto
- guacamole
- herb and flavored oils
- hummus
- jam and jelly (pH greater than 4.6 or Aw of 0.86 or more)
- juice (fruit and vegetable)
- microgreens
- perogies
- pickled eggs
- pickled vegetables (vinegar base, pH greater than 4.6)
- pies (meat filled, pumpkin, sweet potato, custard [e.g., lemon meringue pie])
- processed beans, including baked, refried, and bean salad

- processed low acid vegetables (e.g. pH greater than 4.6: beans, asparagus, beets, mushrooms, broccoli, peas)
- processed meat, sausages
- relish (vinegar base, pH greater than 4.6)
- salsa containing animal protein
- salsa containing no animal protein (if whole or cut tomatoes are used as an ingredient, and the pH of the final product is 4.2 or greater)
- sprouted seeds (bean, alfalfa, mung, etc.)
- tofu
- whole or cut tomatoes used as ingredient (unless acidified such that the pH of the final food is below 4.2)

For products not listed above, please consult Environmental Health.

***Please note:***

*Approval for the preparation, sale and/or service of both low risk and potentially hazardous foods may be given by Environmental Health provided the food is prepared in an approved, commercial food premises.*