

Serving student meals safely during COVID-19

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Feeding students safely is more important and perhaps more challenging than ever before. As the school season begins, how will foodservice operators serve student meals while meeting safety and social distancing requirements? Fortunately, solutions are available that will meet the needs of both staff and students.

Prepackaging hot meals allows students to move quickly through the line while social distancing. This way, they can pick-up their lunch and return to the classroom, go outside or separate into limited seating in the cafeteria. The challenge is to choose the right containers to provide successful takeout meals.

The foodservice team can change the food's presentation, but packaging must maintain the food's taste and temperature while minimizing complexity to the operation. Choosing easy-to-handle sizes for increased portability will factor into the dining plan, as will using containers that feature secure, leak-resistant closures to eliminate messy spills. Choosing the right packaging solution can provide satisfying meals to students and help reduce food waste—all while helping keep everyone safe.

Rigid plastic polypropylene containers offer the best performance for these needs. The packages withstand temperatures up to 230°F in warming units, under heat lamps and in microwaves. This high-temperature performance allows food to be packaged in advance while maintaining food quality. Solutions that feature clear, anti-fog lids provide food visibility to eliminate errors and provide additional safety by negating the need to open the package to check the contents. Finally, many different shapes, sizes and multi-compartment designs are available to assist with portion control and food costs.

Anchor Packaging, a national leader in food packaging, manufactures a collection of containers specifically for school foodservice needs. These polypropylene hinged or separate bases and lids are produced domestically in BRC-certified food-safe facilities and are available from an extensive network of distributors. All can be used for both hot or cold applications, are FDA-approved and are Kosher-approved. Packages are PFAS-free, BPA-free and are recyclable in most communities.

For more information, to request a free sample kit to test with food or to connect with an Anchor Packaging specialist to help develop a solution for school foodservice needs, [click here](#).

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