

# How to keep bad bacteria out of your kid's lunchbox when they go back to school



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Lunchbox with no ice brick? Not cool (literally)



**Popping an ice brick into your child's lunchbox seems like a no-brainer — but a quarter of parents don't do it, according to the [Food Safety Information Council](#).**

Without something in there to keep it cool, the lunchbox turns into a bacteria breeding ground and increases the risk of a good solid dose of food poisoning (which might explain why your kid never eats their lunch or keeps mysteriously “losing” it).

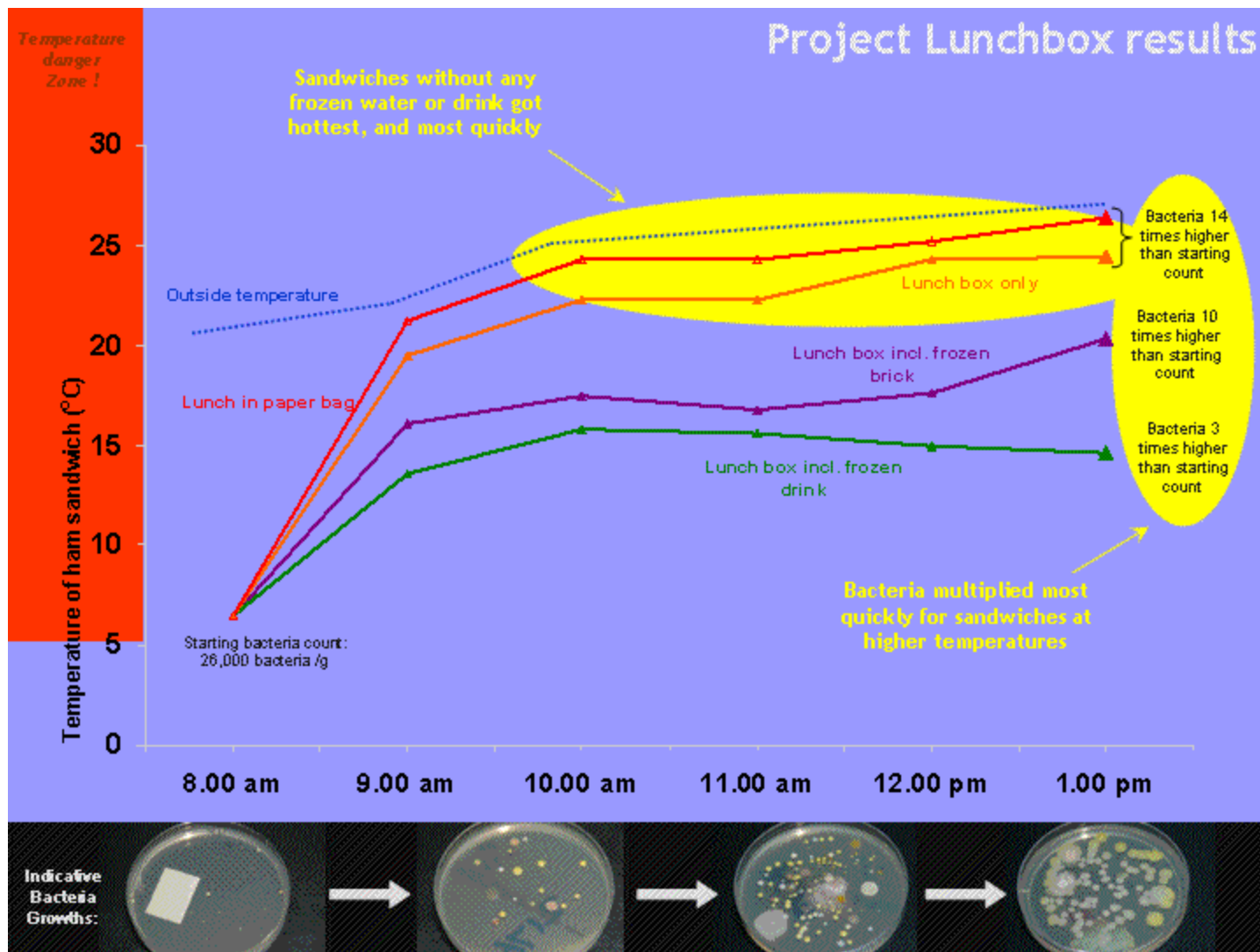
“Bacterial growth is much slower in school lunch boxes if a frozen water bottle or ice brick is included,” said council chair Rachelle Williams in a statement. “We urge parents to simply add one to keep their children's lunch safer.”

[Past research from the NSW Food Authority](#) has shown just how much safer it is.

**RELATED: [What to pack for your kids' school lunch if you're time poor](#)**

The authority's helpful boffins prepared a bunch of ham sandwiches and packed them in a variety of different conditions: in a lunchbox with a frozen drink, in a lunchbox with an ice brick, in a lunchbox with nothing added to keep it cool, and in a paper bag.

The sandwiches were kept outdoors for hours in a shady spot where temperatures reached 25 degrees Celsius — to simulate what your kid does with that lunch you spent *hours* preparing when they arrive at school — and then bacteria samples were measured throughout the day.



NSW FOOD AUTHORITY

Per the results of “Project Lunchbox”, popping a frozen ice brick into a lunchbox slashes the amount of bacteria in the sandwich, and a frozen drink is the best way to keep their numbers down.

It’s worth noting there are bacteria crawling all over *everything* you eat and that most of them are harmless — but the more bacteria present, the higher the likelihood there are *disease-causing* bacteria present.

**RELATED:** [What to pack if your kids are sick of sandwiches and want more gourmet](#)

The Food Safety Information Council added these simple lunchbox food safety tips for the impending return to school:

1. When buying lunchboxes choose ones that have room for a frozen drink or freezer block and are easy to clean and dry.
2. Always wash and dry your hands thoroughly before preparing food.
3. Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly.
4. Make sure lunchbox foods are always well separated from other foods in the refrigerator, particularly raw meats, chicken and fish.
5. Keep the lunch cool in the fridge until you are ready to leave home.

Head to the council's site for more [lunchbox safety tips](#).

Read more at <http://coach.nine.com.au/2017/01/17/10/48/lunchbox-safety#BTqVc2rzxIEGJUjy.99>