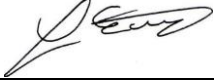


<b>Services covered by this policy:</b>	General Pre-school Children's Service	The Hamlet at Home Adult Services
<b>Post holder(s) responsible for this policy:</b>	Operations Manager	
<b>Date approved:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	
<b>Approved by:</b>	Lorraine Ewing	
<b>Signed:</b>		
<b>To be reviewed:</b>	January 2027	

## A. Policy statement

Our belief is that everyone at The Hamlet should be happy and safe, is unique and valued, can explore choice and opportunities, is encouraged to unlock their potential, can communicate in their own way and is part of the wider community.

The Hamlet believes that, where support provided to Hamlet Users includes help with the cooking, storing, preparing or serving of food, then it has a duty to ensure that Hamlet Users and staff are protected from food-related illness by the adoption of high standards of food hygiene and preparation.

## B. Purpose of this policy and why we have it

This policy describes the approach taken to ensure high standards of food safety and hygiene in line with all statutory requirements and regulations.

It should:

- ensure that Hamlet Users benefit from having food provided for them that is of suitable quality, well presented and prepared and is nutritionally sound
- ensure that Hamlet Users benefit from food that is prepared in a way that is suitable for the individuals and takes into account any allergies, sensitivities or intolerances.
- protect staff and Hamlet Users from food-related illness.

With respect to the food that it provides or that is brought into it, The Hamlet has a duty to ensure that all staff and Hamlet Users should be kept as safe as possible from food poisoning and related food associated illness by the adoption of high standards of food hygiene and food preparation.

Poorly prepared, stored or contaminated food can be the source of potentially fatal infections such as Salmonella and Listeria. The Hamlet management have overall responsibility for the food hygiene standards within the organisation. The Hamlet believes that the effective management of food safety relies heavily on having written operational policies for the safe preparation, storage and handling of food.

Staff are responsible for the day-to-day preparation and cooking of food and associated hygiene practices. Staff should follow the procedures in this policy to ensure the safety of staff and Hamlet User's.

### **C. Scope of this policy**

- The Hamlet Users
- Parents/carers/home support staff of Hamlet Users
- The Hamlet staff
- The Hamlet Volunteers
- Educational or work placements e.g., Occupational Therapy or Nursing
- Visitors

### **D. Policy**

The Hamlet operates the following procedures.

- All food should be prepared, cooked, stored and presented in accordance with the standards required by the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006.
- Staff should keep all food preparation areas, storage areas (e.g. cupboards) and serving areas clean at all times. All tools and equipment such as knives, utensils and chopping boards must also be cleaned regularly during the cooking process.
- All worksurfaces should be sanitised before any food preparation begins.
- Adequate sanitary and hand-washing facilities should be available within the kitchen, including a supply of soap and paper towels for hand drying. All staff must wash their hands before and after handling foodstuffs.
- Everyone in a food handling area must maintain a high level of personal cleanliness and food handlers must wear suitably clean clothes and aprons, tie back long hair and remove any watches or jewellery except wedding band. Gloves should be worn if an individual is wearing nail polish.
- Staff preparing food should take all reasonable, practical steps to avoid the risk of contamination of food or ingredients.
- Food storage areas should protect food against external sources of contamination such as pests.
- Food handlers must receive adequate supervision, instruction and training in food hygiene.
- When serving food, all staff should scrupulously observe appropriate hygiene standards.
- Any member of staff who becomes ill while handling food should stop at once and report to the team leader or manager in charge.

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## Food brought onto The Hamlet premises

The Hamlet recognises that food used on its premises should be stored and prepared safely in compliance with all best practice and legislation.

The Hamlet intends to ensure full compliance with the regulations and guidelines at all times and understands that this must include ensuring the safety of food brought onto The Hamlet premises e.g. packed lunches. Any food brought in with a 'use by' date that has passed will not be given to a Hamlet User.

Any food requiring heating should be brought in, in a shop bought packet with clear heating instructions on the packet. Home-cooked food can be brought in when preheated at home and stored in a flask. Responsibility for heating the food to the correct temperature, will be with the Hamlet User or representative.

## The Hamlet at Home

In all cases, where food is to be prepared in a Hamlet User's home, a preliminary risk assessment of the available food preparation and storage facilities should be carried out. Where a home requires improvements or changes these should be discussed with the Hamlet User or their representative prior to food preparation taking place. Where conditions are assessed as unacceptable then alternative methods of food provision should be sought.

## E. Procedures and monitoring

### On The Hamlet premises

On The Hamlet premises, the provision of safe, healthy and appropriate food which meets all required food safety legislation and nutritional guidelines is the responsibility of management. These responsibilities include:

- ensure that The Hamlet has up-to-date written operational procedures which cover all areas of food safety and nutrition, such as:
  - preparation, cooking and cooling of food
  - washing-up procedures
  - handling of food waste (See [Infection Control policy](#))
  - adhering to the [Infection Control policy](#)
  - transport, delivery, storage and serving of food around the premises
  - training requirements for food handlers (See [Training and Professional Development policy](#))
  - adequate maintenance, cleaning and decor of food areas and equipment

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- implement all necessary food safety policies by having effective management of food safety systems including a risk assessment based upon the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system
- perform all necessary risk assessments, documenting any risk assessment findings and communicating any required changes to the management team and staff
- ensure that kitchens and other food preparation, storing and serving areas are designed to be “fit for purpose” and are kept scrupulously clean, well maintained and in good condition at all times. This includes ensuring that:
  - there are adequate work surfaces and that all surfaces (including work surfaces and surfaces of equipment) in areas where food is handled, particularly those that are touched by food, are maintained in a sound condition and are easy to clean
  - there are adequate washing facilities for cleaning, disinfecting and storing utensils and equipment and separate washing facilities for cleaning food and for washing hands
  - there are an adequate number of flush lavatories available for staff which do not open directly into rooms where staff handle food
  - all catering equipment is constructed of appropriate materials and kept in good order, repair and condition
  - food waste is disposed of in a hygienic and environmentally friendly way
  - the site has an adequate supply of “potable” (drinking quality) water which can be used whenever necessary to ensure that foods are not contaminated
  - the site has the necessary equipment and processes for food to be displayed, kept and served at safe temperatures
- ensure that all staff working with food wash their hands properly, especially after using the toilet
- ensure that staff are provided with adequate personal protective equipment, such as disposable gloves and aprons, and are trained in their use. The service managers will be responsible for ensuring that all such equipment is used properly. The Quality Assurance Manager will complete an audit of this at least annually.
- keep careful records of all food hygiene activities conducted on site
- implement all staff health policies and procedures in relation to food handlers, ensuring that all food handlers who have been sick with a communicable disease do not return to work until at least 48 hours after the end of symptoms and not allowing anyone to handle food or enter a food handling area if they:
  - are suffering from or carrying a disease likely to be transmitted through food

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- have infected wounds, skin infections or sores
- have sickness and diarrhoea
- ensure that all those involved in food preparation, cooking and serving receive adequate supervision, instruction and training in food hygiene
- ensure that any mini-kitchens are kept in a clean and hygienic condition and to the same standards as larger kitchens
- ensure that policies and procedures are in place covering any food brought onto the premises
- ensure that staff inspect and record the delivery of food into the building including food that is donated from a relative, a charity or other organisation.

In line with food safety and hygiene regulations:

- all food preparation areas will be designed to permit good hygiene practice and be easy to clean and disinfect
- all food preparation and storage areas will be designed and sited to provide adequate ventilation and to protect food against external sources of contamination such as pests and vermin — adequate pest control measures will be taken to ensure that the risk of contamination is minimised
- all food preparation areas, storage areas and serving areas will be kept in good repair and condition at all times — regular risk assessment and maintenance checks will be made with the findings recorded and logged
- all food preparation areas, storage areas and serving areas will be kept clean at all times — kitchens will be subject to regular cleaning using colour coded equipment solely for use in kitchen areas in accordance with an established rota; staff will be expected to clean food preparation surfaces, equipment and utensils at regular intervals and as required during food preparation and cooking; records of cleaning activity will be kept and random quality checks made by the service managers
- adequate sanitary and handwashing facilities will be made available for all staff

## Food Preparation and Handling

On The Hamlet premises:

- all food will be prepared, cooked, stored and presented in line with the high standards required by the food safety and food hygiene laws
- all food safety and hygiene policies and procedures will be implemented by having effective management of food safety systems in place which include a form of risk assessment based upon the Hazard Analysis and Critical

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Control Point (HACCP) system; all risk assessment findings will be documented and records kept

- staff preparing food will take all reasonable, practical steps to avoid the risk of cross contamination of food, ingredients, work surfaces and equipment
- all tools, equipment and surfaces that come into contact with food being prepared or served must be kept clean at all times
- everyone in a food handling area must maintain a high level of personal cleanliness and food handlers must wear suitable clean and, where appropriate, protective clothing
- at every stage of meal preparation, food must be protected from contamination likely to render it unfit for human consumption. Contaminating food can also be by the introduction of an allergen likely to cause harm.
- colour coded knives and chopping boards must be used when preparing food to avoid cross contamination, ie:
  - red — raw meat
  - blue — raw fish
  - white — bread and dairy products
  - green — salads and fruits
  - brown — vegetables
- all food stored in the refrigerator should be covered and adequately chilled
- staff should ensure the thorough cooking of all meat, especially poultry
- all food requiring cooking should be cooked just before serving and should not be reheated (especially “at risk” foods such as custards, gravies and meat dishes)
- poultry, rolled meat joints, stews, casseroles, minced meats and meat products should achieve a core temperature of 75°C (using a digital probe thermometer)
- digital probe thermometers should be tested on a monthly basis to ensure that they are giving an accurate reading. They should also be wiped and handled appropriately to avoid cross contamination
- all foods that are to be held hot prior to serving must be kept at above 63°C and should be placed in appropriate equipment, such as a pre-heated bain-marie/hot cabinet, as soon as possible after cooking
- all deep-frozen food should be thawed before cooking (especially important when using a microwave oven)
- all prepared fillings for sandwiches should be stored in a fridge until needed — small quantities of fillings should be taken out as required

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- staff should be aware of the latest guidance relating to Salmonella infection associated with the cooking of eggs
- staff should never reuse utensils which have been used to prepare raw eggs or meat without first washing them with hot water and detergent
- staff should never allow juices from raw meat to come into contact with other foods — cooked food and uncooked food should not be stored together and separate marked cutting boards and knives should be used for raw and ready-to-eat food
- salad, vegetables and fruit must be washed thoroughly
- when serving food, appropriate hygiene standards should be scrupulously observed by all staff
- when serving or displaying food, it can be kept out of temperature control for a limited period of time but this should only be done once and if any food is left after this time it must be thrown away or kept chilled at 8°C or below until it is used — cold foods can be kept above 8°C for up to four hours
- where a Hamlet User requires help to eat their meal this should be provided as quickly as possible to avoid the food going cold again
- if sandwiches are not to be consumed immediately they should be wrapped in food safe packing before display to avoid contamination from handling and to retain their freshness
- all wrapped sandwiches should be labelled with the date and time they were prepared
- it is recommended that sandwiches are stored chilled at all times
- if sandwiches are not refrigerated they should be thrown away after four hours
- wherever possible, staff should use utensils or packaging when serving to avoid direct contact with hands.

### Group cooking activities for Hamlet Users

Staff members who are trained in Food Hygiene must supervise cooking / food preparation activities. Hamlet Users, Volunteers and Placements must follow general food hygiene principles. If a Hamlet User is not able to follow these principles, then they will be supported to prepare food for their own consumption only.

### Eggs

The Hamlet is aware that, following improved food safety controls in recent years about egg production, people can now safely eat raw or lightly cooked hen eggs, or foods containing them, that are produced under the British Lion Code of Practice.

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However, The Hamlet also understands NHS guidance to state that vulnerable people should still avoid raw or lightly cooked eggs that are:

- not British Lion stamped
- not hen eggs (e.g. duck or quail eggs)
- from outside the UK.

In such cases, a risk of Salmonella may still exist and eggs should be cooked through until the white and yolk are solid.

Staff members should be aware of the risk of Salmonella infection associated with foods containing uncooked eggs, such as mayonnaise and certain puddings.

On The Hamlet's premises, all eggs will be procured from a reliable source and will be subject to the British Lion Code of Practice. Staff will be expected to implement the latest best practice in egg preparation to ensure that Hamlet Users can safely benefit from and enjoy eggs prepared in many ways as part of a varied and healthy diet.

In line with NHS advice, Hamlet Users who have a severely weakened immune system and who are on a medically supervised diet prescribed by a health professional should have all eggs cooked thoroughly, even eggs that have the Red Lion stamp. Where appropriate, further advice should be obtained from the healthcare professional or from a dietician.

## Food Waste Disposal

On The Hamlet premises:

- all food waste should be disposed of in a hygienic and environmentally friendly way in line with the [Infection Control policy](#)
- refuse should not be allowed to accumulate in kitchens

## Food Shopping/Ordering and Storage

### Product expiry dates

Staff responsible for food ordering and storage must maintain a strict regime of stock control that includes the removal and disposal of all out-of-date foods.

Staff should always follow the instructions for storage and preparation that appear on food packaging, especially “use by” and “best before” date. Staff should check these dates carefully and look out for advice or instructions on how long food can be kept for once packaging has been opened.

Staff should follow the NHS guidance and best practice catering guidance not to use any food or drink after the “use by” date, even if the food looks and smells fine. The Hamlet recognises that failure to comply with a “use by” date raises the risk of poisoning from food that has spoiled.

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- all catering products will be procured from reliable, high-quality sources
- all products must be used before the use by date or best before date
- all product not used before the use by date or best before date should be disposed of
- care must be taken when using products to check labelling instructions; these might indicate, for example, that the product must be refrigerated after opening or used within three days of opening, etc
- the rule “First In — First Out” should always be applied
- opened packs of food should be sealed and labelled with the opening date/ use by date.

### Refrigeration

On The Hamlet premises, the following rules should be applied when storing food in a refrigerator.

- High-risk foods should be stored between 0–4°C\*.
- Fresh meat, poultry and fish should be stored between 0–1°C.
- Frozen foods to be stored at or below –18°C.
- Cook-chill products to be stored at 3°C or below.

\*High-risk foods are usually those which contain protein and are intended for consumption without further treatment which would destroy such organisms, e.g. all cooked meat and poultry, cooked meat products including gravy and stock, milk, cream, artificial cream, custards and dairy produce, cooked eggs and products made with eggs, for example mayonnaise, shellfish and other seafood, and cooked rice.

On The Hamlet premises:

- refrigerators should be packed in a manner which allows good air circulation
- all food should be covered to prevent drying out, cross contamination and the absorption of odour
- higher risk foods should be stored at the rear of the refrigerator where possible and always above raw foods
- refrigerators should be cleaned on at least a weekly basis using food safe chemicals
- spillages should be cleaned as soon as they occur; after cleaning, the surfaces need to be completely dried
- refrigerators and freezer temperatures should be checked and recorded on a daily basis when the building is in use
- Cloth lunchboxes and carrier bags should not be placed in the fridge

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- Medication stored in the fridge should be kept separate from food or drink items.
- All loose or opened items should be labelled with the date they are brought in or the date they expire.

### **Maintenance, cleaning and decor of food areas and equipment**

The overall responsibility for the maintenance, cleaning and décor of food areas and equipment is with service management. Cleaning requirements are detailed in the [Infection Control Policy](#)

Regularly wash/wipe and disinfect work surfaces.

Drying naturally helps prevent bacteria being spread back to these items on a towel/cloth used for drying.

Clean and disinfect fridges regularly at a time when they do not contain much food. Transfer food to another fridge or a safe cold area and keep it covered.

Items that do not touch food are not as high a priority but they should still be cleaned effectively. Examples include dry storage areas and floors. Take care when cleaning floors so other surfaces are not contaminated by splashing.

Cleaning and disinfection needs to be carried out in two stages: 1. Clean: Using either hot, soapy water or a cleaning product (such as a sanitiser), remove visible dirt, grease and debris from surfaces/ equipment and wipe off or rinse. 2. Disinfect: Following the manufacturer's instructions, apply a disinfectant (such as a sanitiser) all over the surfaces/equipment and leave on for the required contact time.

When using disinfectants or sanitisers, always follow the manufacturer's instructions on the label. These instructions should tell you how to correctly dilute the product and how long you need to leave the product on the surface/ equipment for harmful bacteria to be reduced to safe levels. Sanitisers and disinfectants should meet relevant standards, either BS EN 1276 or BS EN 13697.

### **Washing up**

Where possible, use the dishwasher. Do not overload the dishwasher and make sure it is cleaned regularly. If you are unable to use the dishwasher, wash plates, equipment, etc, in hot soapy water using bactericidal detergent. If you have to use the same sink for raw and cooked food equipment, the water must be changed and these items washed separately.

### **In the Event of Illness in a Food Handler or a Suspected Food-related Health Problem**

If anyone is unwell prior to handling food, the [Infection Control Policy](#) should be followed.

In the event of illness in a food handler or a suspected food-related health problem among Hamlet Users:

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- Anyone who becomes ill while handling food should stop at once and report to whoever is in charge at the time. Discussions should be had with management before they return to kitchen / food tasks
- suspected outbreaks of food-related ill health should be reported immediately to management
- any suspected outbreaks of food-related ill health should be reported immediately to the local public health protection team as per the [Infection Control Policy](#).

### Food brought in

- Hamlet Users are advised to:
  - bring in low-risk foods such as fruit, biscuits and chocolate
  - avoid bringing hot food
  - avoid using raw egg in foods that will not be cooked thoroughly, such as mousse, icing and desserts
  - store and transport home-made or unpackaged foods in a clean, sealable container, preferably plastic and not glass
  - check the “use by” date before bringing in food
  - keep cooked food, chilled food, or cakes and desserts containing cream, in the fridge and transport them in a “cool box” wherever possible.
  - On arrival, food should be stored in the Hamlet User fridge or in a cool bag with an ice pack outside of the fridge.

If a Hamlet User brings in types of food that are unsuitable, staff should tactfully discuss the issue with them and explain why the guidance is important.

Where food is donated from a relative, a charity or other organisation, staff should make all efforts to ensure that the food has been handled safely.

### Training

All staff involved in the provision of food to Hamlet Users should have achieved Level 2 Food Safety and Hygiene. This should be refreshed every 2 years.

### F. Regulations (Health and Social Care Act) and other legal references

- Food Safety Act 1990
- Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- **This policy should be read in conjunction with any other relevant Hamlet policies and accompanying procedures.**

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## Appendix

Food	Type	Refrigerator [40°F (4°C) or below]	Freezer [0°F (-18°C) or below]
Salad	Egg, chicken, ham, tuna, and macaroni salads	3 to 4 days	Does not freeze well
Hot dogs	Opened package	1 week	1 to 2 months
	Unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Luncheon meat	Opened package or deli sliced	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
	Unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Bacon and sausage	Bacon	1 week	1 month
	Sausage, raw, from chicken, turkey, pork, or beef	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
	Sausage, fully cooked, from chicken, turkey, pork, or beef	1 week	1 to 2 months
	Sausage, purchased frozen	After cooking, 3- 4 days	1-2 months from date of purchase
Hamburger, ground meats and ground poultry	Hamburger, ground beef, turkey, chicken, other poultry, veal, pork, lamb, and mixtures of them	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Fresh beef, veal, lamb, and pork	Steaks	3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months
	Chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months
	Roasts	3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months
Ham	Fresh, uncured, uncooked	3 to 5 days	6 months
	Fresh, uncured, cooked	3 to 4 days	3 to 4 months

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Food	Type	Refrigerator [40°F (4°C) or below]	Freezer [0°F (-18°C) or below]
	Cured, cook-before-eating, uncooked	5 to 7 days or "use by" date	3 to 4 months
	Fully-cooked, vacuum-sealed at plant, unopened	2 weeks or "use by" date	1 to 2 months
	Cooked, store-wrapped, whole	1 week	1 to 2 months
	Cooked, store-wrapped, slices, half, or spiral cut	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
	Country ham, cooked	1 week	1 month
	Canned, labeled "Keep Refrigerated," unopened	6 to 9 months	Do not freeze
	Canned, shelf-stable, opened  Note: An unopened, shelf-stable, canned ham can be stored at room temperature for 2 years.	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months
	Prosciutto, Parma or Serrano ham, dry Italian or Spanish type, cut	2 to 3 months	1 month
Fresh poultry	Chicken or turkey, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
	Chicken or turkey, pieces	1 to 2 days	9 months
Fin Fish	Fatty Fish (bluefish, catfish, mackerel, mullet, salmon, tuna, etc.)	1 - 3 Days	2 - 3 Months
	Lean Fish (cod, flounder, haddock, halibut, sole, etc.)		6 - 8 Months

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Food	Type	Refrigerator [40°F (4°C) or below]	Freezer [0°F (-18°C) or below]
	Lean Fish (pollock, ocean perch, rockfish, sea trout.)		4 - 8 Months
Shellfish	Fresh Crab Meat	2 - 4 Days	2 - 4 Months
	Fresh Lobster	2 - 4 Days	2 - 4 Months
	Live Crab, Lobster	1 day .	Not recommended
	Live Clams, Mussels, Oysters, and Scallops	5 - 10 Days	Not recommended
	Shrimp, Crayfish	3 - 5 Days	6 - 18 Months
	Shucked Clams, Mussels, Oysters, and Scallops	3 - 10 Days	3 - 4 Months
	Squid	1 - 3 Days	6 - 18 Months
Eggs	Raw eggs in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Do not freeze in shell. Beat yolks and whites together, then freeze.
	Raw egg whites and yolks	2 to 4 days	12 months
	Note: Yolks do not freeze well		
	Raw egg accidentally frozen in shell	Use immediately after thawing	Keep frozen, then refrigerate to thaw
	Note: Toss any frozen eggs with a broken shell		
	Hard-cooked eggs	1 week	Do not freeze
	Egg substitutes, liquid, unopened	1 week	Do not freeze
	Egg substitutes, liquid, opened	3 days	Do not freeze

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Food	Type	Refrigerator [40°F (4°C) or below]	Freezer [0°F (-18°C) or below]
	Egg substitutes, frozen, unopened	After thawing, 1 week or refer to “use by” date	12 months
	Egg substitutes, frozen, opened	After thawing, 3 to 4 days or refer to “use by” date	Do not freeze
	Casseroles with eggs	After baking, 3 to 4 days	After baking, 2 to 3 months
	Eggnog, commercial	3 to 5 days	6 months
	Eggnog, homemade	2 to 4 days	Do not freeze
	Pies: Pumpkin or pecan	After baking, 3 to 4 days	After baking, 1 to 2 months
	Pies: Custard and chiffon	After baking, 3 to 4 days	Do not freeze
	Quiche with filling	After baking, 3 to 5 days	After baking, 2 to 3 months
Soups and stews	Vegetable or meat added	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Leftovers	Cooked meat or poultry	3 to 4 days	2 to 6 months
	Chicken nuggets or patties	3 to 4 days	1 to 3 months
	Pizza	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months

Source: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/cold-food-storage-charts>

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