

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ENSURES FOOD SAFETY FOR SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM

Tallahassee—The Florida Department of Health (DOH) will be conducting food safety inspections in 61 counties for the Summer Break Spot program, which provides breakfast and/or lunch to children from low-income households across the state. Coordinated with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (DACs) Food, Nutrition, and Wellness Program, more than 3,400 DACs-designated food sites will serve nutritious meals between June and August.

"We care about the food that Florida's children are eating and that is why this partnership is so important," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "We are pleased to join the Department of Agriculture in this endeavor. Ensuring food safety standards are met is crucial to the wellbeing of the children in this program."

DOH Environmental Health programs at the county level will conduct two inspections of each site in their area. Appropriate temperature control, proper hand-washing techniques, and general cleanliness of the facilities will be evaluated. If inspectors note any issues that could potentially cause food-borne illness, a DACs regional specialist will visit the site and DOH inspectors will conduct a re-inspection to ensure all food safety standards are met.

"This year, we are pleased that summer food sites in 61 counties will provide for the 1.6 million Florida children who rely on school lunch throughout the year," said Vakesha Brown-Timley, Environmental Consultant for DOH's Division of Disease Control. "This program is not intended to just feed Florida's children, but also to educate them about healthy choices. The kids love to see the inspectors come out, and they recognize the important role they play in guaranteeing nutritious and safe-to-eat meals."

In addition to inspections, DOH provides consultation to summer food service providers to ensure that the programs handle, transport and store all food in a sanitary manner. Follow-up visits are performed when necessary to confirm that the established safe guards are understood and remain intact.

All Break Spot meals meet nutritional guidelines set by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and must include one serving of milk, two servings of fruit and/or vegetables, one serving of grains, and one serving of protein. Summer food sponsors can feed children at sites throughout the community, including schools, parks, housing complexes, community pools, and recreation centers. Each county is eligible for participation and some have as many as 250 sites that make meals available to local children.

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