

FOOD SAFETY

Preventing food borne illnesses for everyone is important from the store to the consumers. Food borne illnesses can be severe and even life threatening for a pregnant woman and her unborn baby, children, or people with weakened immune systems. If symptoms are serious or the person is very young, old, pregnant, or already ill—call the doctor **immediately**.

Basics for Food Safety

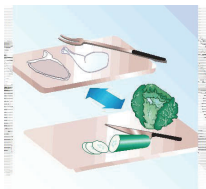
Safe steps in food handling, cooking, and storage are essential to prevent food borne illness. You cannot see, taste, or smell harmful bacteria that may cause illness. Keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold helps prevent the growth of microorganisms that can spoil your food and make you ill. In every step of food preparation, follow the four guidelines to keep food safe:

- Clean
- Separate
- Cook
- Chill



Clean

- Wash hands in hot, soapy water for 20 seconds before and after preparing food, especially after preparing raw meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood. Also, remember to wash your hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets.
- Wash cutting boards, knives, utensils, and counter tops in hot soapy water after preparing each food item before going on to the next one.
- Cutting boards should be run through the dishwasher or washed in hot soapy water after each use. Discard boards that are excessively worn.
- Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If you use cloth towels, wash them often in hot water in your washing machine.
- Using a disinfectant cleaner or mixture of bleach and water on surfaces can provide some added protection against bacteria.

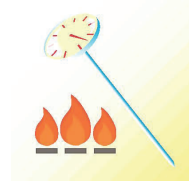


Separate

- Cross-contamination is how organisms that cause food borne illness spread from one food product to another.
- Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other food in your grocery cart.
- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood in plastic bags or containers on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices don't drip onto other foods.
- Never place cooked food back on the same plate or cutting board that held raw meat, poultry, or seafood.
- Consider using one cutting board for raw meat, poultry and seafood and another one for fresh produce.
- Sauce that is used to marinate raw meat, poultry, or seafood should not be used on cooked foods unless it is boiled first.

Cook

- Use a meat thermometer to make sure that meat is cooked all they way through.
 - ◆ ground beef to 160⁰F
 - ◆ ground poultry to 165⁰ F
 - ◆ beef, veal and lamb steaks, roasts and chops to 145⁰F
 - ◆ fresh pork and egg dishes to 160⁰F
 - ◆ stuffing and casseroles should be cooked to 165⁰ F
 - ◆ whole poultry to 180⁰ F
- Color is not a reliable gauge to use with red meat and should only be checked by using a thermometer.
- If a thermometer is not available, poultry is done when juices run clear and fish is opaque and flakes easily with a fork.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm, not runny.
- Make sure there are no cold spots in food cooked in a microwave. For best results, cover food, stir and rotate for even cooking.
- When you cook ahead of time, divide large portions of food into small, shallow containers for refrigeration for safe, rapid cooling.
- When reheating leftovers, heat to 165⁰F and bring sauces, soups, and gravy to a boil. Microwave leftovers using a lid or vented plastic wrap for thorough heating.



Chill

- Bacteria grow most rapidly in the **Danger Zone**—between 40⁰F and 140⁰F—so be sure to refrigerate foods quickly.
- Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods, and leftovers within two hours of purchase or use. Discard any food left out at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Always marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter.
- Never defrost food at room temperature. Instead, thaw food in the refrigerator.
***Tip:** For a quick thaw, submerge in cold water in an airtight package or thaw in the microwave if you will be cooking the food immediately.
- Separate large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quicker cooling and use within four days.
- Do not overstuff the refrigerator. Cool air needs to circulate to keep food safe.
- When in doubt, throw it out—never taste food that looks or smells strange.



For Additional Information Contact:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—www.cdc.gov
- Centers for Disease Control/Foodborne Illness Line (24 hour recorded information) - 1-888-232-3228
- USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service—www.fsis.usda.gov
- USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline—1-800-535-4555
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration—Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition—www.cfsan.fda.gov
- www.FoodSafety.gov
- 1-800-SAFEFOOD
- Partnership for Food Safety Education—fightbac.org
- Your physician or local health department
- KY Food Safety Branch - (502) 564-7181 or <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/info/phps/>



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