

Safe Food Handling

Follow these guidelines to keep you and your family safe from dangerous foodborne bacteria and prevent food poisoning.



CLEAN

Wash hands & surfaces often

- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before beginning food preparation and after handling raw meat or eggs.
- After preparing food, sanitize countertops, dishes, cutting boards, and utensils by washing with hot, soapy water.
- Use paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If using cloth towels or rags, wash them frequently on the hot cycle.
- Always wash produce, even fruits and vegetables with a peel or skin that will be removed. Bacteria can be spread from the outside to inside when produce is cut.



SEPARATE

Don't mix raw meats & produce

- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from other food in shopping cart, grocery bags, and refrigerator.
- Use one cutting board for fruits and vegetables and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- Never put food on a dish or surface that had raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs on it unless the dish has been washed in hot, soapy water.
- Don't reuse marinades for raw foods.



COOK

Cook to the right temperature

- Using a food thermometer is the only way to ensure the safety of meat, poultry, seafood, and egg products for all cooking methods. These foods must be cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy any harmful bacteria.
- The internal temperature required for safety is 145°F for beef, pork, veal, and lamb; 165°F for poultry, 160°F for egg dishes, and 145°F for fish.
- Cook eggs until the yoke and white are firm.
- Bring sauces, soups, and gravy to a boil when reheating.



CHILL

Refrigerate foods promptly

- The refrigerator should be at 40°F or below and the freezer should be 0°F or below.
- Marinate food in the refrigerator.
- Never thaw food at room temperature, such as on the counter top. Safe ways to defrost food are: in the refrigerator, cold water, or microwave. Food thawed in cold water or the microwave should be cooked immediately.
- Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, and other perishables within 2 hours (1 hour on hot days) of cooking or purchasing.
- Use refrigerated leftovers within 3-4 days; frozen food within four months.

Adapted from "Food Facts" by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration