

FOUR FOOD SAFETY TIPS FROM THE FDA



The food supply in the United States is among the safest in the world. However, when certain disease-causing bacteria or pathogens contaminate food, they can cause foodborne illness, often called “food poisoning.”

The federal government estimates that there are about 48 million cases of foodborne illness annually – the equivalent of sickening one in six Americans each year. And each year these illnesses result in an estimated 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. Since foodborne illness can be serious – or even fatal – it is important to know and practice safe food handling behaviors to help reduce the risk of contaminating food. Here are some tips from the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to help reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

CLEAN

Wash hands and surfaces often. Bacteria can be spread throughout the kitchen and get onto hands, cutting boards, utensils, countertops, and food. To ensure that your hands and surfaces are clean, be sure to:

- ☐ Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets.
- ☐ Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next food.
- ☐ Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If you use cloth towels wash them often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.
- ☐ Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten.
- ☐ Rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running tap water, and scrub them with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water.
- ☐ With canned goods, remember to clean lids before opening.

SEPARATE

Separate raw meats from other foods. Cross contamination can occur when bacteria are spread from one food product to another. This is especially common when handling raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs. The key is to keep these foods — and their juices — away from ready-to-eat foods. To prevent cross contamination, remember to:

- ☐ Separate raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, grocery bags, and in your refrigerator.
 - ☐ Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
 - ☐ Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs.
 - ☐ Do not reuse marinades used on raw foods unless they are boiled first.
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COOK

Cook to the proper temperature. Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause illness. Refer to the FDA Safe Cooking Temperatures Chart below for the proper internal temperatures. To ensure that your foods are cooked safely, always:

- ☐ Use a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of cooked foods. Check the internal temperature in several places to make sure that the meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or dishes containing eggs are cooked to safe minimum internal temperatures as shown in the FDA's Safe Cooking Temperatures Chart.
 - ☐ Cook ground meat or ground poultry until it reaches a safe internal temperature. Color is not a reliable indicator of safe temperature.
 - ☐ Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. Only use recipes in which eggs are cooked or heated thoroughly.
 - ☐ When cooking in a microwave oven, cover food, stir, and rotate for even cooking. If there is no turntable, rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking. Always allow standing time, which completes the cooking, before checking the internal temperature with a food thermometer.
 - ☐ Bring sauces, soups, and gravy to a boil when reheating.
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CHILL

Refrigerate foods promptly because cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. Do not overstuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to help keep food safe. Keeping a constant refrigerator temperature of 40°F (4°C) or below is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Use an appliance thermometer to be sure the appliance temperature is consistently 40°F (4°C) or below for refrigerators and the freezer temperature is 0°F (-18°C) or below. To chill foods properly:

- ☐ Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, and other perishables within two hours of cooking or purchasing. Refrigerate within one hour if the temperature outside is above 90°F (32°C).
- ☐ Never thaw food at room temperature, such as on the countertop. Food must be kept at a safe temperature during thawing. There are three safe ways to defrost food: in the refrigerator, in cold water, and in the microwave. Food thawed in cold water or in the microwave should be cooked immediately.
- ☐ Always marinate food in a refrigerator.
- ☐ Divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.
- ☐ Use or discard refrigerated food on a regular basis. Follow the recommendations in the Refrigerator & Freezer Storage Chart at www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/ResourcesForYou/HealthEducators/UCM109315.pdf

SAFE COOKING TEMPERATURES CHART

FOOD TYPE	RECOMMENDED INTERNAL COOKING TEMPERATURE
Ground Meat and Meat Mixtures	
Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	160°F (71°C)
Chicken, Turkey	165°F (74°C)
Fresh Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	145°F (63°C) with a three minute rest time
Poultry	
Chicken & Turkey, Whole	165°F (74°C)
Poultry Parts	165°F (74°C)
Duck & Goose	165°F (74°C)
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165°F (74°C)
Ham	
Fresh (raw)	145°F (63°C) with a three-minute rest time
Pre-cooked (to reheat)	140°F (60°C)
Eggs & Egg Dishes	
Eggs	Cook until yolk and white are firm
Egg Dishes	160°F (71°C)
Seafood	
Fin Fish	145°F or flesh is opaque and separates easily with fork
Shrimp, Lobster, Crab	Flesh pearly and opaque
Clams, Oysters, Mussels	Shells open during cooking
Scallops	Milky white or opaque and firm
Leftovers & Casseroles	165°F (74°C)

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