



June is Home Safety Month, here are a few tips to help ensure that the food you are serving at home is safe. Why is it important to serve safe food? While the food supply in the United States is one of the safest in the world, each year about 76 million illnesses occur, more than 300,000 persons are hospitalized, and 5,000 die from foodborne illness.

By following these four basic safe food handling practices, you can ensure safe meals are being served at home:

CLEAN: Wash hands and surfaces frequently

SEPARATE: Don't cross-contaminate!

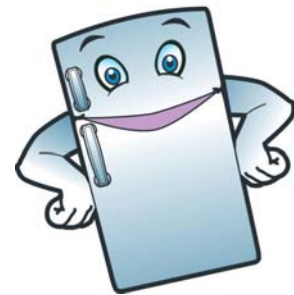
COOK: Cook to proper temperature

CHILL: Refrigerate promptly

Chill

One of the most important things that you can do to keep foods safe is to make sure that they are properly refrigerated. Refrigerating food at 40° F or below is one of the most effective ways to reduce risk of foodborne illness. Microorganisms grow more rapidly at warmer temperatures, and research shows that keeping a constant refrigerator temperature of 40° F or below helps slow growth of these harmful microbes.

- Do not over-stuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to help keep food safe.
- Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs and other perishables as soon as you get them home from the store.
- Never defrost food at room temperature. 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.
- Divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.



Clean

Make sure that you wash your hands, utensils, and surfaces often. Bacteria can be spread throughout the kitchen and get onto hands, cutting boards, utensils, counter tops and food.

- 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 counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next food.
- Wash fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water.



Cook

Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Use a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of cooked foods.

- Cook eggs to 145°F until the yolk and white are firm, not runny. Don't use recipes in which eggs remain raw or only partially cooked.
- Cook fish to 145°F or until the flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork.
- Cook ground meat to at least 155°F. Remember, color is not a reliable indicator of doneness. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of your burgers.
- Cook roasts and steaks to a minimum of 145°F.
- All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F as measured with a food thermometer. Check the internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast with a food thermometer.
- When cooking in a microwave oven, make sure there are no cold spots in food (where bacteria can survive). For best results, cover food, stir and rotate for even cooking. If there is no turntable, rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking.



Separate

Cross-contamination is how bacteria can be spread. When handling raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs, keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods. Always start with a clean scene - wash hands with warm water and soap, wash cutting boards, dishes, countertops and utensils with hot soapy water.

- Separate raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, grocery bags and in your refrigerator.
- Store raw meats on bottom shelves to reduce the risk of raw meat juices dripping onto other foods.
- 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.

