Keeping Food Safe

Foodborne Illness

By handling food properly, you can prevent harmful bacteria and viruses from getting into and growing in your food. You can keep food safe from harmful microorganisms that can make you sick.

Not all bacteria are harmful

- Yogurt and many cheeses are made by adding safe bacteria to milk.
- Some molds are used to make certain kinds of cheeses including Roquefort, blue, Gorgonzola, Stilton, Camembert, and Brie. The mold on these cheeses is safe to eat.

Safety Concerns about mold:

- Throw away moldy foods such as bread, cornmeal, fruit, jam and soft cheeses, such as cottage cheese. You cannot safely remove the mold from these foods. Wash your hands after handling moldy foods.
- Discard any soft cheese showing mold that should not be there.
- For hard cheese, such as Cheddar, cut off at least 1-inch around and below the mold spot (keep the knife out of the mold itself). After trimming off the mold, the remaining cheese should be safe to eat. Re-cover the cheese in fresh wrap and keep refrigerated.

Some people have a greater risk for food borne illnesses.

A food you safely eat might make others sick. People with a higher risk for a food borne illness are:

- Infants and young children
- Older adults
- Pregnant women
- People with weakened immune systems and individuals with certain chronic diseases

Don't gamble with your health

It takes about ½ hour to 6 weeks to become ill from unsafe foods. You may become sick later even if you feel OK after eating.

Don't rely on sight, smell or taste to tell you if food is safe to eat. Even IF tasting would tell … Why risk getting sick? A "tiny taste" may not protect you …as few as 10 bacteria could cause some food borne illnesses!

Safe Food Handling

1 in 6 Americans will get sick from food poisoning this year. 3,000 Americans will die. Keep your family food safe.

Safe steps in food handling, cooking, and storage are essential to prevent foodborne illness. You can't see, smell, or taste harmful bacteria that may cause illness. In every step of food preparation, follow the four Fight BAC! guidelines to keep food safe:

- Clean — Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Separate — Don't cross-contaminate.
- Cook — Cook to proper temperatures.
- Chill — Refrigerate promptly.

Shopping

- Purchase refrigerated or frozen items after selecting your non-perishables.
- Never choose meat or poultry in packaging that is torn or leaking.
- Do not buy food past "Sell-By," "Use-By," or other expiration dates.

Storage

- Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F).
- Check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer with an appliance thermometer. The refrigerator should be at 40 °F or below and the freezer at 0 °F or below.
- Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats within 2 days; other beef, veal, lamb, or pork, within 3 to 5 days.
- Perishable food such as meat and poultry should be wrapped securely to maintain quality and to prevent meat juices from getting onto other food.
- To maintain quality when freezing meat and poultry in its original package, wrap the package again with foil or plastic wrap that is recommended for the freezer.
- In general, high-acid canned food such as tomatoes, grapefruit, and pineapple can be stored on the shelf for 12 to 18 months. Low-acid canned food such as meat, poultry, fish, and most vegetables will keep 2 to 5 years — if the can remains in good condition and has been stored in a cool, clean, and dry place. Discard cans that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted.

Preparation

- Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat, poultry, fish, and their juices away from other food. After cutting raw meats, wash cutting board, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water.
- Cutting boards, utensils, and countertops can be sanitized by using a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water.
- Marinate meat and poultry in a covered dish in the refrigerator.

Thawing

- Refrigerator: The refrigerator allows slow, safe thawing. Make sure thawing meat and poultry juices do not drip onto other food.
- Cold Water: For faster thawing, place food in a leak-proof plastic bag. Submerge in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook immediately after thawing.
- Microwave: Cook meat and poultry immediately after microwave thawing.

Cooking

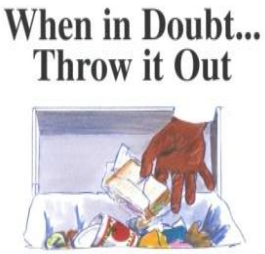
- Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops may be cooked to 145 °F.
- All cuts of pork, 160 °F.
- Ground beef, veal and lamb to 160 °F.
- All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F.

Serving

- Hot food should be held at 140 °F or warmer.
- Cold food should be held at 40 °F or colder.
- When serving food at a buffet, keep food hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays. Keep food cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice or use small serving trays and replace them often.
- Perishable food should not be left out more than 2 hours at room temperature (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F).

Leftovers

- Discard any food left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature was above 90 °F).
- Place food into shallow containers and immediately put in the refrigerator or freezer for rapid cooling.
- Use cooked leftovers within 4 days.



Raw milk and products made from raw both quality and safety. milk (including certain cheeses, ice cream, and yogurt) are foods that can pose severe health risks. Raw milk and products made from raw milk can carry harmful bacteria and other germs that can make you very sick or kill you. At the grocery store, look for milk and milk products that are labeled “pasteurized” (which means the milk has been heated briefly to kill disease-causing germs). If you do not see the word “pasteurized” on the product label, the product may contain raw milk. Pasteurized milk and milk products are safer than raw milk and products made from raw milk.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, www.fsis.usda.gov