FOODFACTS

From the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Safe Food Handling

What You Need to Know

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 1 in 6 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 for you to know and practice safe food handling behaviors to help reduce your risk of accidentally getting sick from contaminated food.

Foodborne Illness Is Serious Business

Foodborne illness can strike anyone. However, some people are at a higher risk for developing foodborne illness. These include pregnant women, young children, older adults and people with weakened immune systems. If you — or someone you care for — are in one of these at-risk groups, it's important to pay extra attention to handling food safely.

4 *Steps to Food Safety*

CLEAN

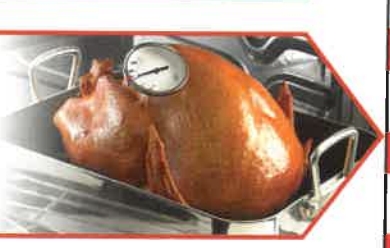
Wash hands and surfaces often

SEPARATE

Separate raw meats from other foods

COOK

Cook to the right temperature



CHILL

Refrigerate foods promptly

Is It Done Yet?

You can't always tell by looking.
Use a food thermometer to be accurate.

SAFE COOKING TEMPERATURES
as measured with a food thermometer

	Internal temperature
GROUND MEAT & MEAT MIXTURES	
Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	160°F
Turkey, Chicken	165°F
FRESH BEEF, PORK, VEAL & LAMB	145°F with a 3 minute rest time
POULTRY	
Chicken & Turkey, Whole	165°F
Poultry Parts	165°F
Duck & Goose	165°F
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165°F
HAM	
Fresh (raw)	160°F
Pre-cooked (to reheat)	140°F
EGGS & EGG DISHES	
Eggs	Cook until yolk & white are firm
Egg Dishes	160°F
SEAFOOD	
Fin Fish	145°F or flesh is opaque and separates easily with fork
Shrimp, Lobster & Crabs	Flesh pearly & opaque
Clams, Oysters & Mussels	Shells open during cooking
Scallops	Milky white or opaque & firm
LEFTOVERS & CASSEROLES	165°F

4 Steps to Food Safety

CLEAN: Wash hands and surfaces often

Bacteria can be spread throughout the kitchen and get onto hands, cutting boards, utensils, counter tops 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 counter tops 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 or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water.
- With canned goods, remember to clean lids before opening.

COOK: Cook to the right temperature

Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause illness. Refer to the Safe Cooking Temperatures Chart 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 Safe Cooking Temperatures Chart.
- Cook ground meat or ground poultry until it reaches a safe internal temperature. Color is not a reliable indicator of doneness.
- 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. Food is done when it reaches the safe minimum internal temperature.
- Bring sauces, soups and gravy to a boil when reheating.

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.
- Don't reuse marinades used on raw foods unless you bring them to a boil first.

CHILL: Refrigerate foods promptly

Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. Do not over-stuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to help keep food safe. Keeping a constant refrigerator temperature of 40°F or below is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Use an appliance thermometer to be sure the temperature is consistently 40°F or below and the freezer temperature is 0°F or below.

To chill foods properly:

- Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs, seafood and other perishables within 2 hours of cooking or purchasing. Refrigerate within 1 hour if the temperature outside is above 90°F.
- Never thaw food at room temperature, such as on the counter top. 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 the 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 http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/ResourcesForYou/HealthEducators/UCM109315.pdf