

Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital Caring for your Child's Nutrition

Basics for Handling Food Safely

Safe steps in food handling, cooking, and storage are key to prevent foodborne illness. You can't see, smell or taste harmful bacteria that may cause illness.

As you prepare food, remember these four important steps:

- 1. CLEAN: Wash hands and surfaces often.
- 2. SEPARATE: Don't cross-contaminate.
- 3. <u>COOK</u>: Cook to proper temperatures using a thermometer.
- 4. CHILL: Refrigerate promptly in shallow containers.

SHOPPING TIPS

- Choose stores with clean floors, shelves, and storage areas.
- Use a safe shopping pattern: First shop for canned foods and dry, packaged foods such as pasta, bread and rice. Then pick up fresh fruits and vegetables. Finally, select frozen and refrigerated items.
- Place meat, fish, chicken, and turkey in plastic bags before placing them in your cart. This prevents germs on the wrapping from spreading to other items.
- Inspect foods and beverages before you buy them.
- Do not purchase packages that are torn, open, leaking or damaged.
- Do not buy food past "Sell By", "Use By" or other expiration dates.
- Do not buy cans that have dents, holes, rust, bulges, or leaks.
- Look for the word "pasteurized" on the labels of milk, cheese, and other milk products. Pasteurization is a process that helps kill germs.

FOOD STORAGE TIPS

- 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.
- Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90°F). Remember the time starts when you place the item in your shopping cart. It's safest to go straight home after food shopping to put items away.
- Use a safe food-storage pattern: First put frozen items in the freezer and cold items in the refrigerator. Next, put away fruits and vegetables.
 Finally, put away canned items and dry, packaged foods.
- Store raw meats, poultry and fish away from ready to eat food.
- Use plastic wrap and covered containers to keep food air-tight.
- Keep canned goods in a cool, dry place. Do not store food in cabinets that are under the sink or that have water, drain, or heating pipes passing through them. Storing foods here can attract bugs, mice, and rats, which can get through openings around the pipes.
- Know how long foods will keep safely in the refrigerator. Use or freeze within:
 - o Raw fish and seafood: 1 to 2 days
 - o Raw chicken and turkey: 1 to 2 days
 - o Ground meat and stew meat: 1 to 2 days
 - Fresh beef/veal/lamb/pork steaks, chops and roasts: 3 to 5 days
 - o Leftovers: 3 to 4 days
 - Luncheon meat: 3 to 5 days
- Store seafood, meat, chicken, and turkey in the coldest part of the refrigerator. The coldest part is usually at the back of the bottom shelf or the bottom bin.
- Put the whole carton of eggs directly into the refrigerator. Do not remove eggs from the carton to put them in the "eggs" area of the refrigerator door. Also, do not wash eggs before storing them.
- Be careful not to overfill your refrigerator and freezer. Overfilling diminishes the appliance's overall ability to keep food cool.

PREPARATION

- Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before, during, 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 boards, utensils, and countertops with hot soapy water. Sanitize by using a solution of 1 tablespoon unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water.
- Use separate cutting boards for raw meat and ready-to-eat foods.
- Marinate meat and poultry in a covered dish in the refrigerator.
- Make sure to thoroughly clean shelves, counters, floors, tabletops, refrigerators, freezers, utensils, can openers, sponges, and towels. This is one of the best ways to keep harmful germs out of your food at home.

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 to allow for safe thawing. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook immediately after thawing.
- Microwave: Cook meat and poultry immediately after microwave thawing.
- DO NOT THAW FOOD ON THE COUNTERTOP. Bacteria can multiply rapidly at room temperature.

COOKING

- Use a thermometer when cooking meat, poultry and fish. Insert into the meat being careful not to touch bone because the bone will be at a higher temperature than the meat.
- Insert the thermometer at least 1 to 2 inches into the deepest area of the food. Insert sideways into thin items like hamburgers.
- The stem of the thermometer should be washed with hot, soapy water after each use.
- Recommended cooking temperatures:

Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops: 145°F

o All cuts of pork: 160°F

Ground beef, veal and lamb: 160°F

o Poultry: 165°F

SERVING

• Hot food should be held at 140°F or warmer.

• Cold foods should be held at 40°F or colder.

• Perishable foods should not be left out more than 2 hours at room temperature (1 hour if the temperature is above 90°F).

LEFTOVERS

- After you finish eating, put cooked food in the refrigerator as soon as you can. Foods cool more quickly if you use shallow containers rather than deep pots. If the food will not be eaten within a few days, wrap the food, write the date on the outside of wrapper, and freeze it.
- Discard any food left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature is above 90°F).
- Use cooked leftovers within 4 days.
- Do not serve leftovers to people at high risk of foodborne illnesses or with compromised immune systems.
- Throw away food that has mold on it. Cutting off the mold will not remove all of the harmful germs.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- If your tap water comes from a private well and not from a city supply, test your well water every year to be sure that it is safe to use. Check with your child's doctor before allowing your child to drink well water.
- Do not let dirty dishes sit in water for a long time before you wash them.
 Germs can grow rapidly from the food left on the plates and in the dishwater.
- When you wash dishes by hand, wash them in hot, soapy water within 2 hours of use and let them air dry.
- Every 6 months, clean your kitchen sink drain, garbage disposal, and the
 connecting pipes by pouring a bleach solution (1 teaspoon bleach per 1
 quart water) or a store-bought kitchen cleaning product (follow the
 company's instructions) down the sink. This cleans out food particles
 trapped in the damp drain and disposal that can encourage the growth
 of germs.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & REFERENCES

Basics for Handling Food Safely

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/basics for handling food safely/

Freezing and Food Safety

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact Sheets/Focus On Freezing/index.asp

Refrigeration and Food Safety

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact Sheets/Refrigeration & Food Safety/index .asp

Safe Handling of Take-Out Foods

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact Sheets/Safe Handling Take-

Out Foods/index.asp

Pediatric Nutrition Care Manual, American Dietetic Association.

Additional Information:		
If you have questions, call: _		, Registered Dietitian
Phone: (717) 531-	or (717) 531-8406	