



## **Food Safety Guidelines for Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation (HSCT) Patients**

Food-borne illness is occurring with increasing frequency. Sources of food poisoning may be the handler, the environment (such as a contaminated work surface), or on the food itself. Bacteria and other organisms exist in most foods. Most of the organisms are of little risk to a healthy person. However, infection is of major concern to persons undergoing a bone marrow or a stem cell transplant. The food these persons eat must be safe.

The following food safety guidelines are intended to supplement the *"Diet Guidelines for Immunosuppressed Patients"* handout that identifies higher risk foods. By following safe food practices, patients and caregivers can reduce the risk of food-borne illness. If you have questions regarding food safety and diet guidelines, talk to your dietitian.

### **Safe Food Handling**

- Purchase a food thermometer. They are available at most kitchen stores or outlets.
- Wash hands frequently-before, during, and after food preparation. Use plenty of hot water and soap and wash for at least 20 seconds.
- Hold food at safe temperatures: hot food **above** 140° F and cold food **below** 40°F.
- Cook meat until well done. Measure the final temperature with a thermometer.
- Thaw meat, fish, or poultry in the refrigerator away from raw fruits and vegetables. Place meats on a dish to catch drips.
- Never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator for over two hours.
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under cold running water before peeling and/or cutting.

- Wash the tops of canned foods before opening.
- During food preparation, do not taste the food with the same utensil used for stirring.
- NEVER TASTE FOOD THAT LOOKS OR SMELLS STRANGE!

**USDA Recommended Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures**

Steaks & Roasts - 145 °F

Fish - 145 °F

Pork - 160 °F

Ground Beef - 160 °F

Egg Dishes - 160 °F

Chicken Breasts - 165 °F

Whole Poultry - 165 °F

### **Microwave Cooking**

- Microwave cooking can leave cold spots in food where bacteria can survive. Rotate the dish a quarter turn once or twice during cooking if there is no turntable in the appliance.
- When heating leftovers, use a loose-fitting lid or vented plastic wrap to cover. Stir several times during reheating.

### **Grocery Shopping**

- Check “sell by” and “use by” dates. Select only the freshest food product.
- Check packaging date on fresh meats, poultry, and seafood. Do not purchase if they are past the “sell by” or “use by” date.
- Do not use food from cans that are damaged, swollen, rusted or deeply dented. Check that packaged and boxed foods are properly sealed.
- Select unblemished fruits and vegetables. Wash all fruits and vegetables (including bagged pre-washed salad greens) before using.
- Avoid foods from sub shops, delis, and pizza parlors.
- In the bakery, avoid unrefrigerated cream and custard containing desserts and pastries.
- Avoid foods from self-serve bulk containers or bins.

- Avoid yogurt and ice cream products dispensed from soft-serve machines, especially public self-serve machines.
- Avoid tasting free food samples.
- Purchase frozen and refrigerated foods last, especially during the summer months.
- Store groceries promptly after purchase. Never leave perishable food in the car.

## Dining Out

- Eat early to avoid crowds.
- Ask that food be prepared fresh in fast food establishments. Ask if fruit juices are pasteurized.
- **Due to the uncertainty of the cleanliness of the handler and produce preparation, consumption of raw fruits and vegetables when dining out is not recommended.**
- Request single-serving condiment packages. Avoid public self-serve condiment containers.
- Avoid high-risk food sources: salad bars, delis, buffets, smorgasbords, potluck dinners, and sidewalk vendors.
- Check the general condition of the restaurant environment. Are the plates, glasses, utensils clean? Are the restrooms clean and stocked with soap and paper towels? How the manager and employees maintain the restaurant may be an indication of the amount of pride they take in preparing the food.
- Check the Pennsylvania website for restaurant inspections at : <https://www.pafoodsafety.state.pa.us/web/inspection/publicinspectionsearch.aspx>

## Additional Information:

If you have questions, call: \_\_\_\_\_, Registered Dietitian

Phone: (717) 531- \_\_\_\_\_ or (717) 531-8406

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