Food Safety Guide

The Partnership for Food Safety Education has 4 simple practices in their Fight BAC!® (fight bacteria) campaign to help consumers prevent foodborne illness. They are:

- Clean – wash your hands and surfaces often
- Separate – do not cross contaminate
- Cook – cook foods to safe internal temperatures
- Chill – refrigerate foods promptly

**Clean**

**Hand Washing**

One of the best ways to stop germs in their tracks is by washing your hands often when handling food.

Your hands and fingernails should be washed well:

- Before handling food or kitchen utensils
- Before serving or eating food
- After using the restroom
- After handling foods, like raw meats or chicken
- After handling dirty dishes or garbage
- After touching your hair, face or body or touching someone else
- After coughing or sneezing
- After eating, drinking, chewing gum or smoking
- After cleaning tables or equipment

**Be sure to wash your hands properly. Each time you wash your hands make sure to:**

- Wet your hands under warm water and apply soap.
- Use good friction and rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds. Wash the palm and back of your hands, as well as between and over your fingers.
- Clean under your fingernails.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands with a clean paper towel or warm air hand dryer.
- Use a dry paper towel to turn off the water faucet.
Countertops, Cutting Boards and Kitchen Equipment

- After each use, wash cutting boards in hot, soapy water or in the dishwasher. Cutting boards with hard surfaces such as plastic are preferable to wooden cutting boards. Hard surfaces have fewer cracks where germs can hide.
- Replace worn cutting boards when the wood has split or becomes stained.
- Clean can openers, blenders and mixer blades after each use in hot, soapy water or in the dishwasher.
- Use clean dishcloths every day. Bacteria grow easily in dirty, wet dishcloths.
- Avoid using sponges to clean dishes and utensils. Sponges can hold germs that can contaminate food and dishes.
- Clean up spills right away.

Separate

- Use separate cutting boards, plates and utensils for raw and cooked foods.
- Do not taste the food with the same utensil used for stirring. Taste foods containing meat, poultry, fish or eggs after they have been thoroughly cooked.
- Always cover raw meat when it is in the fridge to separate it from other foods. When placing meat from the store into your fridge, use freezer bags or aluminum foil over the wrap that the food is already packaged in to prevent leaking.
- Store raw meats on the lowest shelf in the refrigerator to prevent the possibility of its juices contaminating other foods.

Cook

Preparing Food

- Wash tops of canned foods before opening.
- If raw meats have an unpleasant odor or slickness, discard.
- Cook stuffing separately from the turkey.
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before peeling and cutting. Use over ripe fruits and vegetables only when needed in cooking.
- Home canned foods that were not canned correctly may contain bacteria called botulism. This bacteria makes a toxin that if eaten can make you very sick. If you suspect a home canned food may not have been processed properly, if the lid bulges, or if the food has any bad odors or looks strange after opening, throw it out!
- Use a food thermometer to test for doneness. Check in the thickest part of the meat without touching the bone. Use the information on the next page from the USDA as a guide.
Microwave ovens can cook unevenly, leaving cold spots in food where bacteria can survive. Therefore, stir and rotate food for even cooking. Rotate the dish a quarter once or twice during cooking if you do not have a turntable. Make sure food gets hot enough. This means also letting the food sit for 15 to 30 seconds after cooking so the heat can move evenly through foods.

- Keep hot, fully cooked foods above 140 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep cold foods below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Cook food completely before storing. Never partially cook and store for later.
- Never taste food that looks or smells strange.
- Wash hands with soap and water before serving or eating food.
- Serve cooked food on clean plates with clean utensils.

### Thawing Food
- Thaw meat, fish or poultry in the refrigerator and in a dish to catch drips.
- You can thaw food outside the refrigerator by placing foods under a stream of cold running water.
- You can thaw food in the microwave. But if you do, be sure to cook the food right after it is thawed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Type of food</th>
<th>Safe minimum internal temperature in degrees F and cooking guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egg and egg dishes</td>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>Cook until yolk and white are firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Egg dishes, egg sauces, custards</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef, pork, lamb and veal</td>
<td>Raw ground meats (patties and meatloaves)</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raw steaks, chops and roasts</td>
<td>145, allow to rest for at least 3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham</td>
<td>Fresh (raw)</td>
<td>145, allow to rest for at least 3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fully cooked (to reheat)</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry (chicken, turkey, duck, goose)</td>
<td>Any type</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafood</td>
<td>Fin fish</td>
<td>145, cook until opaque and flakes easily with a fork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shrimp, lobster, crab</td>
<td>145, should turn red and flesh should become pearly opaque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clams, mussels, oysters</td>
<td>145, cook until shells open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leftovers, casseroles</td>
<td>Any type</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Chill**

- Keep refrigerated items below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep frozen foods below 0 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish and ground meats within 2 days. Other beef, veal, lamb or pork should be cooked within 3 to 5 days.
- Refrigerate or freeze cooked leftovers in small, covered, shallow containers to allow food to cool more rapidly.
- Refrigerate only as much as can be eaten in 3 to 5 days. Freeze the rest.
- Reheated foods should reach 165 degrees Fahrenheit or a rolling boil before being eaten.
- Frozen food can be kept for up to 6 months in the freezer.
- Keep cooked pie fillings, puddings and custards refrigerated.
- Keep all foods stored in the refrigerator or freezer wrapped or covered.
- Toss out foods needing refrigeration if they have been at room temperature more than 2 hours.
- Do not pack the refrigerator or freezer too full. Cold air must circulate to keep foods cooled safely.
- If going on a trip, use an ice chest for refrigerated and frozen foods.
- If in doubt, throw it out!

**Other food safety tips**

**Storing Food**

- Check expiration dates. Throw away foods older than their “use by” dates. Discard all prepared refrigerated foods after 4 to 5 days.
- Throw away any food that has mold on it.
- If cans of food are bulging, leaking or cracked, or deeply indented in the seam, throw it away.
- Keep food storage areas clean and free of insects or rodents.

**Buying Food**

- Use package dates as a guide. The “sell by” date is how long the product can be sold. The “use by” date is how long the product can be safely eaten. Throw away food items past the “use by” date.
- Do not buy food with torn or damaged packages.
- Do not let raw meat or its juice touch other groceries. Use separate bags for raw meat to keep it from other foods.
- Do not buy cracked or unrefrigerated eggs.
• Frozen foods should be frozen to the touch, and foods that need to be refrigerated should be cold. Add these foods to your shopping cart last to limit the amount of time they are not refrigerated.

• Take groceries right home and store them quickly, especially during the summer months.

A Special Word about Eggs
• Do not use raw, unpasteurized eggs in uncooked or semi-cooked foods, including Caesar salads. Pasteurized eggs or pasteurized, liquid eggs can be used in recipes calling for raw eggs.

• Make homemade ice cream and eggnog only from recipes that call for cooked, stirred custard. Otherwise, use a pasteurized egg product such as Eggbeaters or Davidson’s Safest Choice Pasteurized Eggs

• Cook eggs until the whites and yolks are firm. The yolk should no longer be runny but need not be hard.

• Discard eggs, egg mixtures or prepared egg dishes left at room temperature for more than one hour.

For more information
• Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, www.eatright.org/homefoodsafety
• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food Safety, www.cdc.gov/foodsafety
• Federal food safety information, www.foodsafety.gov
• Partnership for Food Safety Education, www.fightbac.org
• World Health Organization (WHO), Food Safety, www.who.int/foodsafety/en/