



KidsHealth / Parents / Food Safety

Food Safety

Reviewed by: [Mary L. Gavin, MD](#)

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Food safety means knowing how to buy, prepare, and store food to prevent the spread of harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses, like [Salmonella](#) and [E. coli](#).

en español

[Seguridad alimentaria](#)

Always [wash your hands](#) with warm water and soap before preparing foods and after handling raw meat, poultry, fish, or eggs. Use separate cutting boards for meat and produce, and separate plates and utensils for cooked and raw foods.

Here are more ways to make sure your kitchen and the foods you prepare in it are safe.

Buying Food

Put refrigerated items (such as meat, dairy, eggs, and fish) in your cart last. Keep meats separate from produce and other items you eat raw. If your drive home is longer than 1 hour, consider putting these items in a cooler or insulated bag to keep them fresh.

When purchasing packaged meat, poultry, or fish, check the expiration date on the label. Even if the expiration date is still good, don't buy fish or meats that smell or look strange.

Also check eggs before buying them. Make sure the eggs are clean and without any cracks.

Don't buy:

- fruit with broken skin
- unpasteurized ciders or juices
- pre-stuffed fresh turkeys or chickens

Refrigerating and Freezing

Set your refrigerator to 40°F (5°C) and your freezer to 0°F (–18°C) or lower. These chilly temperatures will help keep any bacteria in your foods from multiplying. If your refrigerator doesn't have a thermostat, use an appliance thermometer to be sure the fridge and freezer are at the right temperatures.

Put away refrigerated and frozen food first. Here are some quick tips to remember for foods that need to be kept cool:

- Keep eggs in the original carton on a shelf in your refrigerator (most refrigerator doors don't keep eggs cold enough).
- Put meat, poultry, and fish in separate plastic bags so that their juices don't get on your other foods.

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[Food Safety: Fruits & Vegetables](#)[E. Coli Infections: Diarrhea](#)[Campylobacter Infections](#)[Salmonella Infections](#)[Food Poisoning](#)[View more](#)



Preparing and Cooking Fruits and Vegetables

- Cut away damaged or bruised parts of produce before washing or eating.
- Wash all [fruits and vegetables](#) with plain running water (even if you plan to peel them) to remove any pesticide residue, dirt, or bacteria. Scrub firm produce, such as carrots, cucumbers, or melons, with a clean produce brush.
- Wash melons, such as cantaloupes and watermelons, before cutting to avoid carrying bacteria from the rind to the knife to the inside of the fruit.
- Dry washed produce with a clean towel or paper towel.

Preparing and Cooking Raw Meat, Poultry, Fish, and Egg Products

- Don't wash raw chicken. Washing raw meat and poultry can spread germs around the kitchen.
- Thaw meat, poultry, and fish in the refrigerator or microwave, not at room temperature.
- Cook thawed meat, poultry, and fish right away.
- Marinate meat, poultry, and seafood in the refrigerator. Throw away any leftover uncooked marinades.
- Cook meat until the juices run clear.
- Cook ground beef or poultry until it's no longer pink.
- Cook eggs thoroughly so yolks or whites are firm. Scrambled eggs should not be runny.

Don't serve foods that contain raw eggs, such as uncooked cookie dough, homemade eggnog, and some homemade ice cream recipes. If a recipe calls for raw egg, substitute pasteurized eggs (found in the grocery store's dairy case).

Thorough cooking will kill the germs that can make you and your family sick. A meat thermometer is the best way to tell whether food is cooked thoroughly. (Place the thermometer in the thickest part of the meat and away from bones or fat. Wash the probe between uses.) Refer to package labels or follow these recommendations:

- poultry (whole, pieces, and ground): 165°F (74°C)
- steaks, roasts, and chops of beef, veal, pork, and lamb: 145°F (63°C) with a 3-minute rest period before carving or eating
- ground beef, veal, pork, and lamb: 160°F (71°C)
- fish: 145°F (63°C)
- egg dishes: 160°F (71°C)
- leftovers: at least 165°F (74°C)

Cleaning Up

Keep your kitchen surfaces clean and wash your hands often to help prevent the spread of bacteria. Bacteria could spread to someone else if they use a contaminated dish towel, so use paper towels and change dish towels regularly.

Follow these tips when cleaning up after meals:

- Wipe countertops and other surfaces with warm, soapy water.
- Wash plates, utensils, and cutting boards in hot, soapy water or a dishwasher.
- Replace old, worn cutting boards because bacteria can hide in nicks and grooves in the board.
- Choose thinner dishrags instead of sponges because they can better dry between uses. Wash dirty dishrags and towels often.
- Periodically sanitize your cutting boards, countertops, kitchen sink, drain, and garbage disposal.



Visit [FoodSafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov) for more safety tips, including information on safe storage times and recommended safe minimum temperatures.

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Food Safety

Post Test – March 2023

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1. Food safety means knowing how to buy, prepare and store food to prevent the spread of harmful bacteria that cause _____ illnesses.
2. Use separate cutting boards for meat and produce, and separate plates and utensils for _____ and _____ foods.
3. If the expiration date is good you can buy fish or meats that smell or look strange.
True or False?
4. If your refrigerator doesn't have a thermostat, use an appliance thermometer to be sure the fridge and freezer are the right _____.
5. Put meat, poultry and fish in _____ plastic bags so that their juices don't get on your other food.
6. Wash melons before cutting to avoid carrying bacteria from the _____ to the knife to the inside of the fruit.
7. Washing raw meat and poultry can spread germs around the kitchen.
True or False?
8. A _____ is the best way to tell whether food is cooked thoroughly.
9. Bacteria could spread to someone else if they use a _____ dish towel, so use paper towels and changes dish towels regularly.
10. Choose thinner dishrags instead of _____ because they can better dry between uses.

February 2023 Quiz Answers. 1.Proteins 2.Immune System 3.True
4.Anaphylaxis 5.Prescription Medicine 6.Food Label 7.False
8.Utensils/Cookware 9.Childcare Supervisor 10.Preparation/Prevention



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Training Coordinator
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