

SAFE FOOD
HANDLING



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HEALTHCARE

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What Is Foodborne Illness?

Foodborne illness, often called food poisoning, is any illness that is caused by the food you eat. Safe food handling can help reduce your risk of getting sick from food.

What Are the Signs of Foodborne Illness?

The signs and symptoms of foodborne illness range from upset stomach, diarrhea, fever, vomiting, abdominal cramps, and dehydration, to more severe illness (even death). Consumers can take simple measures to reduce their risk of foodborne illness, especially in the home. If you experience the symptoms of foodborne illness, call your doctor or health care provider.

Guidelines For Safe Food Handling

- **Keep it safe.** refrigerate/freeze all perishable food. Check your refrigerator and freezer temperatures with an appliance thermometer. Your refrigerator temperature should be set at 40 °F or below, and your freezer temperature should be 0 °F or below. Use a refrigerator/freezer thermometer to check the temperatures.
- **Never thaw food at room temperature.** Always thaw food in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in a microwave. After thawing in cold water or in the microwave, you must cook the food immediately.
- **Wash hands with warm soapy water before preparing food.** Wash hands, utensils, cutting boards, and other work surfaces after contact with raw meat and poultry. This helps prevent cross contamination.
- **Never leave perishable food out of refrigeration for more than two hours.** If room temperature is above 90 °F, food should not be left out more than 1 hour. This would include items such as take-out foods, leftovers from a restaurant meal, and meals-on wheels deliveries.
- **Thoroughly cook raw meat, poultry, and fish (see chart on right for safe internal temperatures).** Do not partially cook food. Have a constant heat source, and always set the oven at 325 °F or higher when cooking. There is no need to bring food to room temperature before cooking.

Foods Purchased Or Delivered Hot

Eating Within Two Hours

Pick up or receive the food Hot and enjoy eating within two hours.

Not Eating Within Two Hours

Keeping food warm is not enough. Harmful bacteria can multiply between 40° and 140° F. Set the oven temperature high enough to keep the hot food at 140 °F or above. Check the internal temperature of food with a food thermometer. Covering with foil will help keep the food moist.

Eating Much Later

It is not a good idea to try and keep the food hot for longer than two hours. Food will taste better and be safely stored if you:

1. Place food in shallow containers.
2. Divide large quantities into smaller portions.
3. Cover loosely and refrigerate immediately.
4. Reheat thoroughly when ready to eat.

Foods Purchased Or Delivered Cold

Keep Cold Food Cold

Eat or refrigerate immediately. Cold food should be held at 40 °F or colder.

The Two Hour Rule

Perishable food should not be left out at room temperature longer than two hours. Discard food which has been left at room temperature longer than two hours. For temperatures above 90 °F, discard food after one hour.

Reheating

Reheat food thoroughly to a temperature of 165° F or until hot and steaming. In the microwave oven, cover food and rotate so it heats evenly. Consult your microwave owner's manual for recommended cooking time, power level and standing time. Inadequate heating can contribute to illness. Allow standing time for more even heating.

USDA Recommended Safe Internal Temperatures

Cook foods to the following safe internal temperatures as measured with a food thermometer:

Fresh ground beef, veal, lamb, pork.....**160° F**
Beef, veal, lamb roasts, steaks, chops.....**145° F**
Fresh pork roasts, steaks, chops.....**160° F**
Ham (cook).....**160° F**
Ham (reheat).....**140° F**

Poultry (whole, parts, or ground).....**165° F**
Fish.....**145° F**
Egg dishes, casseroles.....**160° F**
Leftovers (reheat).....**165° F**
Hot dogs, bologna, other deli meats.....**165° F**

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