

Food Safety in the Home

Clean your surfaces, utensils and hands

- Clean and sanitize all utensils, cutting boards, sinks, and countertop surfaces thoroughly before and after preparing food, especially raw meats. Follow these three easy steps:
 - First, wash all items with hot soapy water.
 - Second, rinse these items with hot water.
 - Third, sanitize with $\frac{3}{4}$ tablespoon unscented bleach per gallon of water. This is especially important when preparing raw meat, poultry, eggs or seafood. Keep a supply of the bleach solution in a labeled spray bottle near the sink to sanitize all surfaces that have had contact with raw meats.
- If you use cloth dishtowels, change out daily for a clean one, or use paper towels. Sponges are discouraged since bacteria grow quickly in them.
- Use smooth cutting boards made of hard maple or plastic and are free of cracks and crevices since these types of cutting boards can be easily cleaned. If possible, use separate cutting boards for meats and vegetables.
- Wash your hands before and after handling any meat, poultry, or seafood. Always wash your hands with hot, soapy water after using the bathroom, changing diapers, touching pets, or any other activity that could contaminate your hands, such as handling wastebaskets or trashcans. *Always wash your hands before preparing food!*

Separate when preparing food

- Prevent juices from raw meats, poultry, and seafood from coming into contact with foods such as fruits, salads, and breads and any other foods that will not be cooked.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood stored separately in sealed containers or plastic bags on the lowest shelf in the refrigerator when storing and **when thawing**. If you must thaw food quickly, seal it in a plastic bag and immerse in cold water for about an hour, or in the microwave on the “defrost” setting. Do NOT defrost food at room temperature on the countertop.
- Sauce that is used to marinate raw meat, poultry, or seafood should not be used on cooked foods unless it is boiled before applying. Another option is to separate a portion of the sauce before marinating the meat and use this portion on the cooked meat.

Cook foods to the proper temperature

Use a metal stem type thermometer to check food temperatures. These thermometers can be purchased at most major grocery stores and hardware stores. They have a long metal stem, and the dial generally reads 0-225°F. Be sure to wash and sanitize your food thermometer after each use to prevent cross-contamination of bacteria.

(continued on next page)



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Website: www.tchd.org

Food Safety in the Home (continued)

Meat and Poultry

- Cook poultry to at least 165° F (74 C).
- Ground beef to 155° F (68 C).
- Cook wild game meats to 155°F (68 C).
- Cook pork and any foods containing pork to 145° F (63 C).
- Rare roast beef and rare beefsteak to 130° F (55 C).

Eggs and Fish and Stuffing

- Cook eggs and fish to 145° F (63 C).
 - Shrimp and lobster turn red and the flesh becomes pearly opaque when it is finished cooking. Scallops turn a milky white or opaque and firm.
 - Clams, mussels, and oysters open their shells when they are finished cooking. Those with shells that remain closed should be thrown away. Avoid eating oysters, mussels, clams, other shellfish, and raw fish if you are immunocompromised or have a liver disorder.
- Cook stuffed fish, meat, or pasta, or stuffing containing fish, meat or poultry to 165° F (74 C).

Leftovers

- Always reheat leftovers to at least 165° F (74 C). If using a microwave to reheat or cook food, rotate and stir the dish several times to ensure even cooking and use a thermometer to confirm that foods have been cooked to their proper temperature.

Produce

- Wash all produce before eating since it may have bacteria on it that can make your family sick. Even produce with a peel must be washed prior to cutting as you could accidentally carry the contamination from the exterior to the interior of the fruit. So wash items such as watermelons, avocados and cantaloupes before slicing them open.
- Clean and sanitize (with the bleach solution described in the first paragraph) the kitchen sink before washing fruits and vegetables.

Chill foods properly to prevent bacteria growth

- Maintain your refrigerator at 41°F or below. Place a refrigerator thermometer on the top shelf and check it daily. Refrigerator-type thermometers can be purchased at most major grocery stores and hardware stores.
- Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food, and leftovers within 4 hours or place food in shallow containers no more than 4 inches deep for quicker cooling in the refrigerator. Don't stack containers or cover with a lid until they have completely cooled.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator, not at room temperature.
- Use seafood, meat, or poultry within the expiration date on the package or store it in the freezer.
- Don't over pack your refrigerator. Cool air needs to circulate to keep foods at the proper temperature.

Purchasing seafood

- Only buy from reputable sources and only buy seafood that is refrigerated or properly iced.
- Don't buy cooked seafood such as shrimp, crabs or smoked fish if it is displayed in the case in contact with raw fish.