

FOOD SAFETY

When the immune system is suppressed, the body becomes less effective at fighting off microbes that may cause food-borne illnesses. It is important to guard against this by properly buying, handling, cooking, serving, and storing foods. The following guidelines can help you lower your risk of food-borne illnesses.



- Always store food at safe temperatures: Cold food below 40° F.
- Don't leave food at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- Don't thaw frozen food at room temperature. Thaw the food in the refrigerator or defrost in the microwave oven.
- Refrigerate or freeze perishable items as soon as possible after use. Use the proper containers: airtight plastic containers, plastic wrap, or aluminum foil. Remember to label and date stored food so that you can keep track of how old the food is.
- Buy food in amounts that can be eaten before they spoil.
- NEVER use food you think may be spoiled.
- Don't use cans with bulges or those with leaks or dents along seams.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water before handling or eating food.
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before eating or cooking them.
- Wash cutting boards and knives in hot, soapy water before and after each use.
- Use separate cutting boards for meat/poultry and fruits/vegetables.
- NEVER eat raw meat, raw seafood, raw poultry, raw fish such as sushi, or raw eggs.
- ALWAYS thoroughly cook meat and fish (to 160°F), breasts and roasts (to 170°F), and poultry (to 180-185°F) to the well-done stage.
- ALWAYS cook shellfish. Use only shellfish that are purchased closed. Boil for 3-5 minutes until shells open. When steaming, cook 4-9 minutes from the start of steaming. Discard any shellfish that do not open during cooking.
- Don't eat soft cooked or "over easy" eggs. Hard cooked eggs are best.
- Don't eat from salad bars or food bars where you are not sure if food has been contaminated or left out for long periods of time.
- Don't buy or eat foods that were sitting behind a deli counter since you do not know how well they were handled and they may be contaminated.
- Heat hot dogs until steaming hot before eating.
- Use only pasteurized milk products.
- Heat leftovers thoroughly to an internal temperature of 165° F. Don't keep leftovers over 2 days.
- Don't use foods after the expiration date.

The most important thing to remember about food safety is:
IF IN DOUBT—THROW IT OUT!!