

FOOD SAFETY

Food borne illnesses can occur due to failure in handling food safely. Bacteria from raw food can contaminate the hands, kitchen counters or any other surface they may be exposed to. Awareness about food safety can prevent hospitalization from food bacteria borne illnesses.

MAINTAIN CLEANLINESS

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds after using the bathroom or changing diapers.
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes and counter tops with hot soapy water after use.
- Use paper towels to clean surfaces. If you use cloth, then wash it with hot water in the washing machine.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables under running water. Use brush on firm skinned fruits and vegetables.
- Do not keep books, school bags or shopping bags, which touch the floor, on kitchen counters.
- Clean your fridge, at least once a week.
- Clean appliances after use. Pay attention, especially to buttons and handles.

DO NOT CROSS CONTAMINATE

Separate raw meat, seafood, poultry and eggs from cooked food items while shopping and during storage at home.

Use separate cutting boards for meat and vegetables/fruits. Never put cooked food in a utensil in which raw food was placed.

COOK FOOD TO PROPER TEMPERATURE

- Use a food thermometer to check internal temperature of food.
- Cook poultry to 165-degrees F
- Ground meat to 160-degrees F
- Cook fish to 145-degrees F
- Reheat food to 165-degrees F
- Do not use recipes with raw eggs. Cook eggs till the yolk and white is firm.

ROOM TEMPERATURE VERSUS REFRIGERATION

- Refrigerate or freeze meat immediately.
- Never let raw meat or cut fruit sit for 2 hours at room temperature.
- Never defrost food at room temperature. Instead defrost in the fridge, in cold water or in the microwave.
- Marinate food in the fridge.

RISKY FOODS YOU SHOULD AVOID

- Unpasteurized ice-creams and juices that are not branded and sold at road sides.
- Food sold by road side vendors like burgers, chaat, or samosas.
- Food served at buffets and weddings that is prepared in bulk and kept without temperature control. If you have to select foods from the above category, select those that are well-cooked. Try to avoid salads.



References: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-safety>