

TROOP 655

Food Preparation Guidelines



Foodborne Illness: What You Need To Know

What Is Foodborne Illness?

Foodborne illness often presents itself as flu-like symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever, so many people may not recognize illness may be caused by bacteria or other pathogens in food.

Bacteria that cause disease are called pathogens. When certain pathogens enter the food supply, they can cause foodborne illness. Millions of cases of foodborne illness occur each year. Most cases of foodborne illness can be prevented. Proper cooking or processing of food destroys bacteria.

Danger Zone

Bacteria multiply rapidly between 40 and 140 °F. To keep food out of this "Danger Zone," keep cold food cold and hot food hot. Keep food cold in the cooler, in coolers. Never leave perishable foods, such as meat, poultry, eggs and casseroles in the "Danger Zone" over 2 hours; 1 hour in temperatures above 90 °F.

How Bacteria Get in Food

Bacteria may be present on products when you purchase them. Plastic-wrapped boneless chicken and ground meat, for example, were once part of live chickens or cattle. Raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs are not sterile. Neither is fresh produce such as lettuce, tomatoes, sprouts, and melons.

Foods, including safely cooked, ready-to-eat foods, can become cross-contaminated with bacteria transferred from raw products, meat juices or other contaminated products, or from food handlers with poor personal hygiene. When preparing for your troop remember that there may be an invisible enemy ready to strike. It's called bacteria and it can make you sick. But by following four simple steps, you have the power to Fight BAC!® and keep your food safe

Clean: Wash hands and food-contact surfaces often. Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, knives, sponges, and counter tops.

Separate: Don't cross-contaminate--don't let bacteria spread from one food product to another. This is especially true for raw meat, poultry and seafood. Keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods.

Cook: Cook to proper temperatures. Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness.

Chill: Refrigerate promptly. Refrigerate foods quickly keeps most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying.

When You Shop

Do not purchase canned goods that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted. These are the warning signs that dangerous bacteria may be growing in the can.

Separate raw meat, poultry, and seafood from other foods in your grocery-shopping cart and in your refrigerator.

Buy cold foods last. Plan to drive directly home from the grocery store. You may want to take a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs for perishables. Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours. Refrigerate within 1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F.

When You Store Food

Make sure you have ice in the cooler.

When You Prepare Food

Wash hands and surfaces often. Bacteria can be spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, utensils, and counter tops. To prevent this:

- Wash hands with soap and warm water before and after handling food, and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets.
- Use paper towels or clean cloths to wipe up kitchen surfaces or spills. Wash cloths often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next item. A solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water may be used to sanitize washed surfaces and utensils.

When cutting boards are used:

- Always use a clean cutting board.
- Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood..

Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food:

- In the cooler.
- In the microwave, but cook the food immediately.

Food may also be thawed in cold water. Be sure that the sink or container that holds food is clean before submerging food.

Cook food immediately after thawing.

Marinades may be used to tenderize or add flavor to food. When using marinades:

- Always marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter.
- Sauce that is used to marinate raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood should not be used on cooked foods, unless it is boiled before applying.
- Never reuse marinades for other foods.

Discard any leftover batter, or breading, after it has come in contact with raw food.

Wash fruits and vegetables with cold water before use. Thick-skinned produce may be scrubbed with a brush. Do not use soap.

Food should not be tasted until it reaches a safe internal temperature. Use a clean utensil each time you taste food, otherwise you may contaminate the food.

Do not use a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood unless the plate has first been washed in hot, soapy water.