

Eat Well, Age Well: Fight Foodborne Illness

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You have been cooking and eating food your entire life, so why start worrying about food safety now? As you age, you gain wisdom of the mind, but changes also occur in the body. With age comes a decrease in the body's natural defenses to fight bacteria. You may be more prone to getting sick from your food. Your sense of smell and taste may also decrease, so you may not always be able to tell if foods have gone bad. Understanding how to handle your food safely will keep you healthy and independent.

Follow the basic 10 tips below to keep your food safe and prevent foodborne illness for yourself, your friends, and your family.

Tip 1: Clean

Wash hands often, using warm water and soap.

Tip 2: Separate – don't cross-contaminate!

Wash cutting boards, dishes, countertops, and utensils with hot, soapy water. Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (and their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods.

Tip 3: Cook

Cook food to its proper temperature to kill foodborne bacteria (see below).

Don't go by whether or not your meat is pink to tell if it is done. Rare, medium and well done mean different things to different people. The only way to know for certain meat is cooked properly is to check the temperature. Always use a food thermometer to make sure it is at a correct temperature.

Tip 4: Chill

Keep meat, poultry, eggs, and other perishables at 40°F or lower. Keep a thermometer in the refrigerator to check the temperature frequently.

Don't forget to check your refrigerator and freezer thermometer.

Your REFRIGERATOR thermometer should read 40°F or slightly lower.

Your FREEZER thermometer should read 0°F.

Tip 5: Be cool and follow the Two-Hour Rule!

All leftovers should be chilled within two hours.

Tip 6: Lazy leftovers

Eat leftovers within three to four days. Reheat any leftovers in the microwave, oven, or on the stovetop to 165°F.

Tip 7: Never defrost food at room temperature

Instead, defrost in one of these three ways:

- in the refrigerator
- in cold running water
- in the microwave

Note: If you thaw food in cold water or in the microwave, make sure you cook it immediately!

	<p>165°F</p> <p>All Poultry</p> <p>Whole, Parts, Ground, Stuffing, Leftovers, and Casseroles</p>
	<p>160°F</p> <p>Ground Meat</p> <p>Beef, Veal, Pork and Lamb Egg Dishes</p>
	<p>145°F</p> <p>Fish, Steaks, Chops and Roasts + three minute rest time for</p> <p>Beef, Veal, Pork and Lamb</p>

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Tip 8: Save and store it for later

Don't try to keep food hot for longer than two hours.

Instead:

- divide large quantities into smaller portions,
- place food in shallow containers,
- cover loosely, and
- refrigerate immediately.

Tip 9: Wash all your fruit and veggies

Rinse all fruits and vegetables under cool running water. Some fruits and vegetables with rough textured skin can have bacteria living on the outside of their skin. Rinse and scrub firm-skinned fruits and vegetables with a clean brush under running tap water. This will keep harmful

bacteria from being transferred inside the fruit and vegetables when you cut or peel them.

Tip 10: If in doubt, throw it out!

If you are not sure if a food is safe to eat, don't risk it. **Throw it out!**

Don't forget to look on the label and check for "use by," and "expiration dates." Use only products that are within the appropriate date!

Sources:

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service. 2006. Food safety for older adults. www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Food_Safety_for_Older_Adults.pdf.

Follow the USDA Cold Storage Chart for recommended storage times			
Food	Type	Refrigerator (40°F)	Freezer (0°F)
Eggs	fresh, in shell	3-5 weeks	do not freeze
	hard cooked	1 week	does not freeze well
Deli products	egg, chicken, ham, tuna salad, and macaroni salads	3 days	does not freeze well
Hot dogs	opened package	1 week	1-2 months
	unopened package	2 weeks	1-2 months
Bacon and sausage	bacon	7 days	1 month
	sausage, raw from chicken, turkey, pork, beef	1-2 days	1-2 months
Luncheon meat	opened package	3-5 days	1-2 months
	unopened package	2 weeks	1-2 months
Hamburger and other ground meats	hamburger, ground beef, turkey, veal, pork, lamb, and mixtures of these	1-2 days	3-4 months
Fresh beef, veal, lamb, pork	steaks	3-5 days	6-12 months
	chops	3-5 days	4-6 months
	roasts	3-5 days	4-12 months
Fresh poultry	chicken or turkey, whole	1-2 days	1 year
	chicken or turkey, pieces	1-2 days	9 months
Seafood	lean fish (flounder, haddock, halibut, etc.)	1-2 days	6-8 months
	fatty fish (salmon, tuna, etc.)	1-2 days	2-3 months
Leftovers	cooked meat or poultry	3-4 days	2-6 months
	chicken nuggets, patties	1-2 days	1-3 months
	pizza	3-4 days	1-2 months

For more tips, visit the Family Nutrition Program at



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