Eat Smart, Live Strong

Most of us have a lifetime of experience shopping, preparing and eating food. And fortunately Americans enjoy one of the safest most healthful food supplies in the world. But a lot has changed over our lifetime—from the way food is produced and distributed, to the way it is prepared and eaten.

What is also changing is your ability to fight off dangerous bacteria that may invade your body through the food you eat. The good news is that well known saying, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” remains true. Preventing the growth of dangerous microorganisms in food is the key to reducing the millions of illnesses and thousands of deaths each year. You may already know a lot about how to prevent illness from mishandled food. Federal studies show that older adults do a better job of handling food safely than any other age group. Even so, when it comes to staying safe, you can never know too much. Summer picnics and family gatherings are just around the corner. Let’s stay food safe this summer.

What’s the Story About Food Safety?

Some people are more likely to get sick from harmful bacteria that can be found in food. And once they are sick, they face the risk of more serious health problems, even death. A variety of people may face these special risks—pregnant women and young children, people with chronic illnesses and weakened immune systems and older adults, including people over 65. Why are older adults more susceptible to foodborne illness?

Everyone’s health is different, including his or her ability to fight off disease. But immune systems weaken as we age. In addition, stomach acid also decreases as we get older—and stomach acid plays an important role in fighting off harmful bacteria. Preventing the growth of dangerous microorganisms in food is the key to reducing the millions of illnesses and thousands of deaths each year. You may already know a lot about how to prevent illness from mishandled food. Federal studies show that older adults do a better job of handling food safely than any other age group. Even so, when it comes to staying safe, you can never know too much. Summer picnics and family gatherings are just around the corner. Let’s stay food safe this summer.

Special points of interest:

We will be learning how to pressure and steam can fresh vegetables safely at Grandview as well as freezing them. Anyone interested is welcome but must call to register first.
The Whole Story About Food Safety cont.

role in reducing the number of bacteria in our intestinal tracts—and the risk of illness. Plus underlying illnesses such as diabetes, some cancer treatments, and kidney disease may increase a person’s risk of foodborne illness. It can be difficult for people to recognize when harmful bacteria in food have made them sick. For instance it’s hard to tell if food is unsafe, because you can’t see, smell or taste the bacteria it may contain. Sometimes people think their foodborne illness was caused by their last meal. In fact, there is a wide range of time between eating food with harmful bacteria and the onset of illness. Usually foodborne bacteria take 1 to 3 days to cause illness. But you could become sick anytime from 20 minutes to 6 weeks after eating some foods with dangerous bacteria. It depends on a variety of factors, including the type of bacteria in the food. Sometimes foodborne illness is confused with other types of illness. If you get foodborne illness, you might be sick to your stomach, vomit, or have diarrhea. Or symptoms could be flu-like with a fever and headache, and body aches. The best thing to do is check with your doctor.

Foodborne illness can be dangerous, but is often easy to prevent.

Separate: Don’t Cross Contaminate

Cross Contamination is the scientific word for how bacteria can be spread from one food product to another. This is especially true when handling raw meat, poultry and seafood, so keep these foods and their juices away from foods that aren’t going to be cooked. Here’s how to Fight BAC! Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other foods in your grocery shopping cart and in your refrigerator. Keep raw meats refrigerated until ready to cook. At room temperature, bacteria in food can double every 20 minutes.

If possible, use a different cutting board for raw meat, poultry and seafood products. Always wash cutting boards, dishes and utensils with hot soapy water after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, eggs and unwashed fresh produce. Place cooked food on a clean plate. If you put cooked food on the unwashed plate that held raw food (like meat, poultry or seafood), bacteria from the raw food could contaminate your cooked food.
The 2 Hour Rule

Harmful bacteria can multiply in the “Danger Zone” (between 40 and 140 degree F). So remember the 2 hour rule. Discard any perishable food left at room temperature longer than 2 hours.

On hot summer days when barbeques are common, take extra precautions. When temperatures are above 90 degrees F., discard food after 1 hour!

Cook to Proper Temperatures

Food safety experts agree that foods are safely 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.

Cook beef, veal and lamb roasts and steaks to at least 145 degrees.

Cook all poultry to a safe minimum internal temp. of 165 degrees or higher according to personal preference.

Cook ground beef, where bacteria can spread during processing, to at least 160 degrees.

Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm.

Fish should be opaque and flake easily with a fork.

Keeping Cold Foods Cold

When eaten at room temperature, cold foods should be eaten within 2 hours or refrigerated or frozen for eating at another time.

At room temperature, bacteria in food can double every 20 minutes. The more bacteria there are, the greater the chance you could become sick.

So, refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from multiplying. A lot of people think it will harm their refrigerator to put hot food inside—it’s not true. It will keep you and your food safe.

Set your home refrigerator to 40 degrees or below and the freezer unit to 0 degrees or below. Check the temperature occasionally with an appliance thermometer. Divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.

If you can’t eat and enjoy your cooked food within 2 hours, be sure to keep it hot (above 140 degrees F). Use a food thermometer to be sure cooked foods remain hot enough. Covering the food while maintaining it’s internal temperature in an oven or Nesco roaster will help prevent the food from drying out.

Refrigerate or freeze leftovers as soon as possible.
**Safe Thawing**

Never thaw foods at room temperature. **You can safely thaw food in the refrigerator.** Four to five pounds takes 24 hours to thaw. So if you plan on having a turkey on the grill at your next barbeque, be sure to check the weight of your bird and plan accordingly.

Deep frying a turkey or any poultry can be a tasty treat. However, turkey fryers were never meant to shorten the thawing time of your turkey. NEVER put a frozen or partially frozen turkey into a hot deep fryer. The hot oil will flare up and chances of you, your home or someone else being burned is almost a guarantee.

A little preplanning will lead to a healthy, happy and safe summer.

If you need a food or refrigerator thermometer, they can be purchased very inexpensively at your local hardware store, Target or Wal-Mart.

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**Refrigerator Time Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Maximum Storage Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>Fresh in shell: 4-5 weeks, Hard cooked: 1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Products</td>
<td>Milk: 1 week, Cottage cheese: 1 week, Yogurt: 1-2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deli Foods</td>
<td>Entrees, cold or hot: 3-4 days, Salads: 3-5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luncheon Meats</td>
<td>Opened: 3-5 days, Unopened: 2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>1-2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meats</td>
<td>Beef and pork: 3-5 days, Poultry: 1-2 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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