

You have a role in food safety!

Bacteria multiply on food that is mishandled and some of these bacteria may cause disease. By making sure the food you buy and prepare remains safe, you can play an important role in reducing the risks of foodborne illness.

Buyer be aware!

Examine food and its packaging at the store - if it leaks have it repackaged. Examine food again at home. Avoid swollen or leaking cans, or damaged packages - they may expose the contents to bacteria. Get your fresh or perishable foods last and put them away first - surface bacteria begin to multiply as soon as food surfaces warm.



Store it right!

Keep the refrigerator at 40°F or less. Keep the freezer at 0°F or less.



Keep it clean!

Always clean your hands, utensils and cooking surfaces thoroughly. Wash your hands with soap and hot water before you handle food, repeatedly while you prepare it, and again when you've finished. Clean (soap and hot water) and sanitize (bleach and water) cutting boards and utensils after use. Clean (soap and hot water) and sanitize (bleach and water) countertops, cutting boards and utensils with a bleach solution (5mL/1tsp. bleach per 750mL/3 cups water). This will kill surface bacteria.



When in doubt, throw it out!

Examine food carefully immediately before you use it. Look for damaged packaging, obvious mold growth, discoloration and unusual odors, feel and texture.



Make sure it's thawed right!

Thaw foods in the refrigerator. Thawing in cold running water or in a microwave oven is also acceptable. Thawing at room temperature is unsafe because surface bacteria begin to multiply as soon as the surface warms.



Cook foods right!

Prepare foods quickly, cook them thoroughly and serve them immediately. Don't let potentially unsafe foods linger at temperatures where bacteria can grow. The "danger zone" is between 41°F and 135°F.



Don't spread it around!

Keep certain foods, like meats and their juices, separated from others during storage and preparation. Rinse and sanitize dish clothes often and use separate dish towels for each part of the kitchen (one for each counter) so as not to spread bacteria. Keep a separate cutting board for meat. Keep foods covered. Flies, other insects or accidental splashing during preparation of other foods can introduce bacteria.



Food Safety Program

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Jefferson County Public Health

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