

4 Steps to Food Safety

There are a few key factors that impact foodborne illness: food from unsafe sources, improper holding temperatures, improper cooking temperatures, dirty surfaces or tools, and personal hygiene. When preparing food, consider these 4 Steps to Food Safety: clean, separate, cook, and chill.




CLEAN

- Germs that cause food poisoning can survive in many places and spread around your kitchen.
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water before, during, and after preparing food and before eating.
- Wash utensils, knives, and cutting boards with warm, soapy water.
- Wash off produce before using or eating, particularly ones that will be left raw.




SEPARATE

- Cross-contamination is the transfer of a harmful substance from one food item to another, usually from raw to a cooked or ready-to-eat food.
- Prevent cross-contamination by washing hands and surfaces often, especially after contacting raw foods.
- Use separate utensils and cutting boards for raw and cooked or ready-to-eat foods.
- Be sure any raw meat or eggs in the refrigerator are kept separate from ready-to-eat foods or produce.




COOK

- Food is safely cooked when the internal temperature is high enough to kill germs that can make you sick.
- Harmful bacteria can grow between 41°F and 135°F, or what is known as the “danger zone.”

RECOMMENDED COOKING TEMPERATURES

Use a digital thermometer to ensure your food is safely cooked to the correct temperature.

145°F:
Fish, eggs,
beef, pork,
lamb

158°F:
Ground
beef

165°F:
Chicken, turkey,
casseroles,
stuffed shells




CHILL

- Most cooked food should not sit out for more than 4 hours after cooking.
- Quickly cool perishable food and refrigerate or freeze.
- Separate large amounts of leftovers into multiple small, shallow containers for quicker cooling.
- If properly cooled and stored, most leftovers are safe to consume within 7 days.
- Use a digital food thermometer to check the final temperature when reheating leftovers.
 - Oven or Stovetop:** Cook food to 165°F for minimum of 15 seconds.
 - Microwave:** Cook food to 165°F for minimum of 2 minutes within 2 hours.
- Reheat food only once, discard uneaten portions of reheated food.