

SEPTEMBER IS FOOD SAFETY MONTH

HAVE YOU EVER EATEN SOMETHING AND FELT SICK HOURS LATER?

Food borne illnesses can strike anyone, but there are a few things you can do to try to protect yourself. The Partnership for Food Safety Education has created a Fight BAC!® campaign to educate people on how to keep food safe from bacteria. Unhealthy bacteria are what cause some people to get sick. Below are some important tips to follow from the Fight BAC!® campaign.

1) CLEAN: Wash Hands and Surfaces Often!

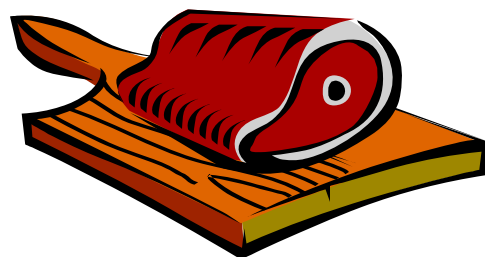
Washing your hands with warm, soapy water for at least twenty seconds can stop the spread of bacteria. Be sure to do this before and after handling food, after using the bathroom, changing diapers, handling pets, etc.



Also, be sure to wash all items used to prepare food items with hot, soapy water before using it for another food item. This includes countertops, cutting boards, dishes, utensils, etc. If you use a cloth towel to clean up the kitchen, be sure to wash it often or use paper towels. Fruits and vegetables should be rinsed under running tap water before eating.

2) SEPARATE: Don't Cross-Contaminate!

Be sure to separate foods such as raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs away from ready-to-eat foods. This will prevent cross-contamination. Cross-contamination occurs when bacteria from an uncooked food is spread to another food item. When the other food item is then eaten, the bacteria can cause people to become sick. Food should be kept separate in the refrigerator, grocery bags, and a different or clean cutting board should be used for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, seafood, or poultry. Remember, cooked foods should never be on the same plate as raw meats, poultry, seafood, or eggs.

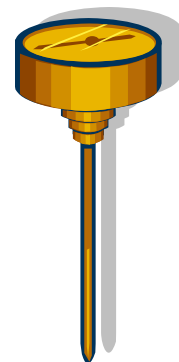


3) COOK: Cook to Proper Temperatures!

Temperature plays a big role in food safety. The best way to make sure cooked food is safe is to use a digital or dial food thermometer to be sure that foods are completely cooked. You should insert the thermometer into the center of the food for at

Proper Temperature:

- | Whole Poultry--180°F
- | Poultry Breasts--170°F
- | Cooked Meats (Hot Dogs)--165°F
- | Ground Poultry Burgers--165°F
- | Ground Beef Burgers--160°F
- | All Cuts of Pork--160°F
- | Beef, Veal, & Lamb Steaks--145°F
- | Roasts and Chops--145°F
- | Leftovers--165°F



least 30 seconds to get an accurate reading. See the Proper Temperature box on the first page for a list of the appropriate temperatures. Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm and avoid recipes where eggs remain raw or partially cooked. Fish should not be see-through and must flake easily with a fork. If you are cooking in a microwave, be sure that there are no cold spots in the food. For best results, cover the food, stir, and rotate it for even cooking. Also, be sure to bring sauces, soups, and gravy to a boil when reheating.

4) CHILL: Refrigerate Promptly!

How many times have you been out to eat and went to a movie or ran an errand while your leftovers sat in the car? Did you ever wonder if it is safe to eat your leftovers after being unrefrigerated for so long? It is important to refrigerate or freeze your leftovers within two hours or sooner. Cold temperatures keep harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying. Divide large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator. And be sure to not over pack the refrigerator. Cool air must circulate to keep food safe. When you reheat leftovers, they must be heated to at least 165°F. If the item had been frozen, remember to never defrost the food at room temperature. Foods should be thawed in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave. After three days, leftovers stored in the refrigerator should be thrown away.



FOOD SAFETY AND LUNCH

Remember food safety when packing lunch for work and school. You can apply the tips above to keep your lunch safe. Always wash your hands before preparing and eating your lunch. Use an insulated bottle to keep hot foods hot and use an insulated lunch box for keeping perishable food cold. Freezer gel packs or frozen juice boxes can be used to keep cold food cold until lunchtime. If there is a refrigerator available, use it. Items that are perishable such as fruits and vegetables that are cut, meat, poultry, egg sandwiches, etc, should be thrown away if not eaten at lunch. Food such as crackers, peanut butter, packaged pudding, and canned fruits are good items for easy packing.



2-HOUR RULE

NEVER LET FOOD THAT HAS BEEN PREPARED SIT OUT FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS. FOOD NEEDS TO BE REFRIGERATED BEFORE TWO HOURS OR THROWN AWAY!

RESOURCE:

Partnership for Food Safety Education:
www.fightbac.org

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