



Environmental Public Health FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM

KEEPING SAFE WHEN IT COMES TO FOOD!

The CDC estimates that 48,000,000, or one in six Americans are affected by foodborne illness every year, ranging from mild to more serious illness that may result in hospitalization and even death. Common symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps. The good news is that there is a lot you can do to keep yourself and those you care about safe and protected. Here are some tips that you can use to help prevent foodborne illness every day.

At Home:

- 1. Stay out the kitchen when you're sick!** Never prepare food for others if you are experiencing any symptoms of foodborne illness including: vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, fever, or sore throat with fever. Also, avoid handling food for others if common cold symptoms such as coughing, sneezing or discharges from the eyes, nose or mouth cannot be controlled.
- 2. Cover open cuts or sores.** Always make sure that open cuts on your hands or wrists are covered tightly with a bandage and consider wearing single-use food service gloves over the bandage. These can usually be found in any grocery or other store where cleaning supplies and equipment are sold.
- 3. Wash hands, wash hands, wash hands!** Examples of times when hand washing is critical include: before beginning any food prep, when changing tasks, after coughing/sneezing, after using the bathroom, after handling raw animal foods, after handling cleaning supplies or chemicals or any other time contamination of your hands may have occurred.
- 4. Keep raw animal foods separate from non-animal foods.** Unless the foods are being combined and cooked together, keep raw animal foods separate during storage and preparation.
- 5. Cook raw animal foods to the minimum required temperature.** Make sure you have a working thermometer and keep a reference chart handy with recommended minimum cooking temperatures.
- 6. Do not thaw perishable foods on the counter or at room temperature.** Thaw in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave (as long as it will be immediately cooked).
- 7. Properly clean work areas and equipment.** Make sure that all cutting boards, knives, utensils and other equipment used are cleaned in between each different product type. This can usually be done by scrubbing the items with hot, soapy water, and then following up with a wash and rinse in a residential dishwasher. To eliminate pathogens that may be present in raw animal foods such as eggs or chicken, consider an extra step (after washing and rinsing) of sanitizing your countertops and equipment. This can be done by rinsing the equipment a second time with very hot water (above 180 degrees F), placing items into a household dishwasher with a sanitizing cycle, or with the use of



Environmental Public Health FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM

KEEPING SAFE WHEN IT COMES TO FOOD!

chemical sanitizing solutions sold to be used on food contact surfaces. These solutions often contain the active ingredients of either chlorine or quaternary ammonium compounds. For information about how to make your own sanitizing solutions, visit the MA Partnership for Food Safety Education at <http://www.mafoodsafetyeducation.info/>

8. **Cool cooked foods rapidly.** If cooked food won't be consumed or served right away, cool it rapidly by reducing the volume of food to be chilled. Do this by putting food into smaller containers for storage, and sit these in an ice water bath to bring down the temperature quickly. You may also add ice to finished products that can use the additional water. Next, put the partially cooled food containers into the refrigerator or freezer to finish cooling. Always follow these guidelines: Cool hot food to 70 degrees F within the first 2 hours after cooking is completed and to 41degrees F or lower within the next 4 hours.
9. **Don't let perishable foods sit out for extended periods of time.** Prepare foods in small batches, and put these directly into the refrigerator to reduce the chances for bacterial growth.
10. **Use a new/clean or disposable utensil when taste testing.** Don't dip your fingers in the frosting or lick the stirring utensil; taste food in a manner that will not contaminate the food.

At the Grocery Store:

1. **Do not eat while you are shopping!** Avoid sampling fruit or opening a package of food while you are shopping. This will protect others from any germs you are carrying.
2. **Place packages of raw animal foods in a separate food bag.** These are usually provided in the seafood and meat department, but you can also grab some from the deli.
3. **Use a hand sanitizer after handling packages of raw animal foods.** Many grocery stores have started providing this right next to the display cases, or you can carry your own small supply.
4. **Keep raw animal foods separate from all other foods in the cart.** Try putting all packages of raw animal foods below the cart, separate from produce and other packaged foods and cosmetics.
5. **Check dates, package integrity and overall appearance** of food before placing it in your cart. Avoid selecting: dented or bulging cans, bruised or damaged produce, open or damaged packages, and expired or about-to-expire products.
6. **Make sure that raw animal foods are bagged separately from other foods.** If a grocery store clerk is bagging, request that raw animal foods be placed in a separate bag.
7. **Limit the amount of time perishable foods are held out of temperature control.** If your commute home with the groceries will exceed 1 hour, bring a cooler with ice to keep perishable foods cold.



Environmental Public Health
FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM

KEEPING SAFE WHEN IT COMES TO FOOD!

8. **Wash reusable bags frequently** and always after using them to transport raw animal foods.

At Work:

1. **Keep your lunch cold.** If you are packing a meal to eat later in the day, store in a cooler with ice packs or immediately place in refrigerator upon arriving at work.
2. **Wash your hands before eating.** Before taking your break, always wash your hands first.
3. **Wash your hands after touching commonly touched surfaces.** Shared phones, elevator buttons, hand railings, door handles, copiers, etc. can be sources of harmful pathogens.
4. **Stay home when you're sick.** Coming in when you are sick can contaminate your own workspace and possibly infect others.
5. **Wash hands after coughing, sneezing or wiping your nose.**
6. **Avoid sharing drinks or utensils with co-workers.**
7. **Discard or refrigerate leftover perishable food from lunch or meal break.**
8. **When having an office party,** remember that leftover foods requiring refrigeration should be eaten or discarded within 4 hours of leaving temperature control.

When Dining Out:

1. **Advise your server of any food allergies.** Speak with the chef or manager if necessary to discuss ingredients and preparation methods.
2. **Read the consumer advisory** for raw products and make an informed decision when ordering any raw animal foods or those that are served undercooked.
3. **Choose where you eat wisely!** If the bathrooms (used by customers) are not clean or properly maintained, the back (where they are preparing your food) may not be, either!
4. **Always wash your hands before eating.** If there is no public restroom, as is the case when ordering from food trucks, use hand sanitizer before eating.
5. **Make sure to immediately refrigerate leftovers.** If you're not going home after dining or don't have the ability to refrigerate your leftovers or put them under ice, don't take them!
6. **Do not eat or drink from utensils, glasses or dinnerware that is visibly dirty.** Ask for a clean replacement.
7. **If you see something, say something!** If the employee is preparing your food with bare hands or has just wiped their face and touched your food, ask them to correct this with a new portion, so that you can be assured your food is safe.

When attending potlucks, parties and BBQs:



Environmental Public Health
FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM

KEEPING SAFE WHEN IT COMES TO FOOD!

1. **Find out** if there will be any way to keep your foods needing temperature control hot or cold during the event. If there is no way to keep foods hot or cold, they should be served immediately and then discarded after everyone has been served. Proper temperature control means that hot, cooked foods are held hot, above 140 degrees F, and cold foods requiring refrigeration are kept cold, at or below 41 degrees F. Remember that foods should not be out of proper temperature control for more than 4 hours.
2. **Prepare food immediately before the event** or cool it properly and refrigerate it if it will be prepared in advance.
3. **Transport food in a way that keeps it hot or cold.** Use insulated containers and ice and coolers where necessary.
4. **Avoid bare-hand contact** with finished foods and those you are preparing. If you are making food for others, consider single-use, food service gloves to prevent bare hand contact. At the event, provide utensils to mix, serve or dispense the food.
5. **Follow tips under “Keeping Yourself Safe At Home” when preparing food.**
6. **Wash your hands before** setting up your food or preparing it, once you arrive on site.
7. **Select foods to bring that are non-perishable** if there is no way to maintain the temperature.
8. **Use ice, insulated containers and hot holding equipment**, such as Sterno units, to maintain food temperatures during service. Ensure that every portion of food in a large pan has enough heat supplied to it if you choose to use Sterno.
9. **Keep food protected from flies and other contaminants** by covering it, if it will be left out unattended.
10. **Avoid bringing raw or undercooked foods to the event**, unless there will be a safe way to store, handle and cook these while achieving adequate, internal cooking temperatures.