

Keep Foods Safe to Eat

WHY IS FOOD SAFETY SO IMPORTANT?

For older adults, eating foods with harmful bacteria can cause serious illness or death. Handle foods properly to help keep them safe to eat.

AT THE GROCERY STORE

- Buy pasteurized milk and juice.
- Don't buy unpasteurized milk, unpasteurized juice, soft cheeses, or raw sprouts. These foods can be unsafe for older adults.
- Don't buy foods in containers that are damaged.
- Choose cold and frozen foods just before checking out.
- Keep cold and frozen foods chilled on the way home, or head straight for home so cold foods stay as cold as possible.

AT HOME

CLEAN

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before handling foods.
- Wash utensils, knives, and cutting boards in hot soapy water.

SEPARATE

- Use a separate cutting board for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- Don't thaw frozen foods on the counter. Defrost them in the refrigerator or microwave oven. Then cook them immediately.

COOK

- Cook meats, poultry, seafood, and eggs thoroughly.
Use a food thermometer to check the temperature.
- Put cooked foods in the refrigerator if they won't be eaten right away.

CHILL

- Keep foods cold in a refrigerator set between 35 and 40 degrees F.
- Use a refrigerator thermometer daily to check the temperature.

WASH YOUR HANDS

Wash your hands BEFORE you prepare food.

Wash your hands AFTER you...

- Touch uncooked meat, poultry, fish, or eggs.
- Touch soiled plates, utensils, or equipment.
- Touch your nose or any part of your body.
- Sneeze or cough.
- Stop preparing food to answer the phone.
- Eat or smoke.
- Use the toilet.
- Take out the trash.

HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS

Before you touch food, follow these 4 simple steps.

1. Wet your hands with warm, running water.



3. Rinse your hands well.



2. Add soap and rub your hands to make a lather.



4. Dry your hands with a clean towel.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Gateway to Government Food Safety Information

Website: www.FoodSafety.gov

REFERENCES

- *Fight BAC! Keep Foods Safe from Bacteria.* Partnership for Food Safety Education, 2004. Website: www.fightbac.org/main.cfm (accessed March 2006).
- *Wash Hands.* University of Massachusetts Extension NEP, 1999.