



September 2006 National Food Safety Month

September is National Food Safety month. Proper food handling is important to prevent food-borne illnesses from developing. Children, elderly, pregnant women, and those with compromised immune systems are most vulnerable to food-borne infections. Extra precaution should be taken when preparing meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and milk.

Personal Hygiene

It is important to remember to have good personal hygiene when preparing foods. Proper hand-washing is essential to prevent cross-contamination from surfaces or objects you may have touched. Surfaces and equipment should also be properly cleaned. The following sanitization steps provide an extra margin of care.

Important Food Safety Tips

- Separate raw and cooked foods when handling, storing, or preparing food.
- Be sure to keep raw foods in containers away from other foods. Their juices can drip onto cooked foods and contaminate them.
- Be sure to use different utensils and equipment for raw and cooked foods.
- Cook foods to the proper internal temperature to kill any bacteria that may be present.
 - Cook beef and egg dishes to 165°F.
 - Cook poultry dishes to 180°F.
- Avoid the temperature danger zone when leaving food out. Keep cold food cold; hot food hot!!! Germs like the same temperatures we do.
 - The danger zone is the temperature range where bacteria can freely grow, 40°F-140°F.
 - When food is left out for more than 2 hours, it is wise to throw it out. Bacteria could have easily grown during those 2 hours.
- Always store food immediately and make sure it is properly covered.

An easy rule of thumb to remember is “when in doubt, throw it out!”

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