

Food safety is a year-round concern. When cooking indoors and outdoors, remember food safety is an important factor of food fun. Be sure to take the right precautions to avoid food poisoning and food-borne illnesses any time of the year.

### Safety at the supermarket:

- Check the "sell by" or "use by" date. If it's expired, don't buy it
- Don't buy cans with dents, bulges, or rust
- If frozen foods aren't solidly frozen, don't buy them
- Open cartons of fresh eggs. If any are cracked, don't buy them
- Never buy dairy products that are unpasteurized
- Bring refrigerated and frozen foods home immediately after shopping and store them promptly

### Store it right:

- Set refrigeration between 35°F and 40°F; freezers should be at or below 0°F
- Refrigerate meat, fish, and poultry on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator to prevent raw juices from coming into contact with other foods
- Follow the "use by," "keep refrigerated," and "safe handling" information on packages
- If a package smells or looks suspicious, throw it out even if the "use by" date has not expired

### Preparing safe food:

- Always thaw frozen meat, fish, or poultry in the refrigerator
- Always marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the kitchen counter, and discard leftover marinades
- Keep your cooking area clean
- Wash hands with soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling any meat products
- Cover cuts or sores with bandages or wear plastic gloves
- Never chop vegetables or salad ingredients on a cutting board used to prepare raw meats, fish, or poultry unless the board was thoroughly cleaned between uses
- Thoroughly wash all utensils, containers, cutting boards, and work surfaces
- Use separate serving plates and utensils for raw and cooked foods

### Cooking to perfection:

- Use separate utensils for sampling and stirring
- Don't sample foods that contain raw meat, fish, poultry, or eggs unless they are fully cooked
- Don't roast meat or poultry at temperatures below 325°F. Cooking foods at low temperatures for long periods of time may encourage bacterial growth
- Don't baste foods with marinades used on raw meats during the last 10 minutes of cooking

### Serve it safe:

- Always use clean utensils and serving plates for cooked foods
- Don't leave any perishable food like meat at room temperature for more than two hours
- Pack lunches in insulated containers with a freezer pack
- Serve hot foods at a temperature above 140°F and cold foods below 40°F

### Handling leftovers:

- Refrigerate cooked food within two hours after cooking; divide large amounts of leftovers into small portions and place in shallow containers for quick cooling
- Reheat leftovers to 165°F or until steaming hot
- Label and date cooked foods. If you don't plan on eating them within a few days, freeze them



From [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)

