Food Safety for Preparing Food

Four Steps to Food Safety

- **Clean** — Wash hands and surfaces often.
- **Separate** — Don’t cross-contaminate.
- **Cook** — Cook to the right temperature.
- **Chill** — Refrigerate promptly.

1. **Clean**
   - **Wash your hands** frequently with soap and water.
     - Before and after preparing food.
   - **Clean and then sanitize** sinks, surfaces and utensils.
     - Clean with warm soap and water.
     - Sanitize with a sanitizing solution.

2. **Separate**
   - Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs **separate**.
   - Use **separate plates and utensils** for raw and cooked foods.
   - Store raw meat and poultry below other foods in coolers, refrigerators and freezers.

3. **Cook**
   - Cook all foods to a safe internal temperature as measured by a food thermometer.
     - Beef, pork, lamb and veal (steaks, roasts and chops): 145°F with a three-minute rest time.
     - Ground meats (beef, pork, lamb and veal): 160°F.
     - Poultry (whole, parts and ground poultry): 165°F.
     - Fish and seafood: 145°F.
     - **Reheat leftovers to 165°F.**

4. **Chill**
   - **Danger Zone** — between 40 – 140°F.
   - Perishable foods must be **chilled within 2 hours**; otherwise, throw away.
   - Use all refrigerated leftovers **within 3 to 4 days**.

**Keep Hot Foods Hot**
- Keep at 140°F or warmer.
- Travel with hot foods in insulated warming bags.
- Store hot food in slow cookers, chafing dishes or a warm oven until ready to serve.

**Keep Cold Foods Cold**
- Keep at 40°F or cooler.
- Travel with foods in coolers packed with ice.
- Keep cold food on ice, in coolers or in the refrigerator until ready to serve.
- Serve small amounts at a time.
## Food Storage Tips

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PANTRY</th>
<th>REFRIGERATOR</th>
<th>FREEZER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEMP RANGE</strong></td>
<td>Above freezing (32°F) and below 90°F</td>
<td>40°F or below (Retail fridges approx. 26°F)</td>
<td>0°F or below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIPS</strong></td>
<td>Safest at room temperature (60-70°F)</td>
<td>Don’t store perishables in the refrigerator door</td>
<td>Safest to thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **WHEN TO DISCARD** | • Discard cans that have large dents, rust, or are swollen or bulging.  
• Discard packages that are torn or have holes in the packaging. | • Discard perishable foods that have begun to spoil.  
• They may develop an off-odor, flavor or texture due to spoilage bacteria. | • Frozen foods are safe in the freezer indefinitely.  
• Quality of some frozen foods can begin to decrease after 1-2 mo. |

### Contact Information

**FoodSafety.gov**: The federal gateway for food safety information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service</th>
<th>U.S. Food and Drug Administration</th>
<th>State and Local Health Departments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline</td>
<td>FDA Food Code (2017)</td>
<td>Find your state agency:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-888-MP-Hotline (1-888-674-6854)</td>
<td><a href="https://www.fda.gov/foodcode">www.fda.gov/foodcode</a></td>
<td><a href="https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html">https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M – F</td>
<td>10 AM – 6 PM ET</td>
<td>Also lists retail and food service codes and regulations by State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://ask.usda.gov/">https://ask.usda.gov/</a></td>
<td><strong>FDA Safe Food Hotline</strong></td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat and FAQs available</td>
<td>1-888-SAFEFOOD</td>
<td>Search for your county’s Environmental Health Dept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:MPHotline@usda.gov">MPHotline@usda.gov</a></td>
<td><a href="https://www.fda.gov/food/resources-you-food/industry-and-consumer-assistance-cfsan">https://www.fda.gov/food/resources-you-food/industry-and-consumer-assistance-cfsan</a></td>
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### Food Safety and COVID-19: Best Practices

**CDC recommends** the following preventive actions for everyone:

- **Avoid** close contact with people who are sick.
- **Avoid** touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- **Stay home** when you are sick.
- **Cover your cough or sneeze** with a tissue; throw the tissue in the trash.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - After going to the bathroom; before eating; after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
  - Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

 CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. **You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it.**

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