

KEEPING FOOD SAFE

Foodborne illness is caused by bacteria and other micro-organisms. These can multiply very fast in food given warm, moist conditions, eg, room temperature.

Clean, safe and careful handling of food can prevent these micro-organisms from getting into the food (contamination).

Thorough cooking will kill most harmful micro-organisms and chilling will slow their growth in cooked and ready to eat food.

Prevent foodborne illnesses by following these guidelines.

BUYING SAFE FOOD

You can reduce your chances of buying contaminated food by:

- checking the 'use by' date before buying food
- avoiding any damaged foods eg, dented tins, cracked eggs, food packaging with broken seals
- avoiding food from chilled or frozen food cabinets which are overfilled or warm
- making sure you use the tongs provided when selecting food from a delicatessen or sandwich bar
- only buying perishable foods such as sandwiches containing meat (including chicken), egg, fish or cheese, when they are displayed in refrigerated cabinets

- checking that the food in hot display cabinets is steaming hot when you buy it.

TAKING FOOD HOME SAFELY

- Take chilled and frozen food home as quickly as possible and put it in the refrigerator or freezer immediately.
- Use a chilly bin with an ice pack if you have a long trip or if the weather is hot.
- Make sure your raw meat (including poultry) is well wrapped and doesn't drip on to other food.

CHILLING FOOD

To slow the growth of micro-organisms in food and to keep it fresh, store it in the following ways:

In the refrigerator

- The temperature should be between 2°C and 4°C (check with a thermometer)
- Cover raw meat (including poultry) and place the container on the lowest shelf to prevent any juices dripping onto other foods.
- Cover all cooked food and place on a high shelf away from the raw meat.
- Always thaw food in the refrigerator or microwave (using the defrost setting), not on the kitchen bench.
- Refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible. Only store cooked food for two days if it is to be reheated. If it is not used then throw it out.

In the freezer

- Only freeze fresh good quality food.
- Only freeze small quantities of food at a time.

WASHING HANDS

Wash your hands thoroughly by using plenty of soap, rinsing your hands well and then drying them on a clean towel:

- before and after preparing food
- after going to the toilet or changing a baby's nappy
- after playing or working with animals
- after blowing your nose
- after gardening.

FOOD SAFETY IN THE KITCHEN

To avoid contaminating food:

- always use clean utensils when preparing foods. Use hot soapy water or a dishwasher to wash the dishes
- use separate chopping boards when preparing raw foods (especially meat and poultry) and cooked or ready to eat foods
- if separate boards aren't available, scrub your chopping boards clean in hot soapy water and dry them thoroughly
- keep your bench top, refrigerator, microwave and stove clean
- use clean dishcloths and tea towels
- avoid coughing or sneezing over food
- do not allow pets near food or on bench tops
- wash all fruit and vegetables thoroughly
- keep food covered to protect from flies and other insects.

COOKING FOOD

Cooking food thoroughly helps to kill the micro-organisms in food.

- Make sure meat (including poultry) is totally thawed before you cook it.
- Preheat the oven so food cooks as quickly as possible.
- Make sure food is cooked and steaming hot right through to the middle.
- Meat, especially pork, chicken and minced meats such as hamburgers, meat loaf and sausages, should be cooked until the juices run clear and there is no pinkness in the middle.
- When microwaving, stir the food regularly to distribute the heat and follow the standing times after taking food from the microwave.
- When cooked food is to be eaten later, cool it as quickly as possible, then cover and place in the refrigerator.
- When barbecuing use separate dishes and utensils for raw food and cooked food.

REHEATING FOOD

- Reheated food, such as casseroles and stews should be served steaming hot right through.
- Food should never be reheated more than once.

SERVING FOOD

- Serve hot food steaming hot.
- Keep cold food in the refrigerator until just before it is needed.
- Transport food for picnics in chilly bins or cool bags with ice packs.

Remember: you can prevent foodborne illnesses!

CLEAN

keep hands, utensils and working surfaces clean

COOK

cook food thoroughly

COVER

cover food.

CHILL

always refrigerate food

