

Food Safety Factsheet

4 Basic Guidelines

1. Clean-Wash hands and surfaces often
2. Separate-Don't cross-contaminate
3. Cook-Cook to proper temperature
4. Chill-Refrigerate promptly

Shopping

- Purchase refrigerated or frozen items after selecting your non-perishables
- Never choose meat or poultry in packaging that is torn or leaking.
- Do not buy food past "Sell-by," "Use Buy," or other expiration dates.

Storage

- Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 degrees F)
- Check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer with an appliance thermometer. The refrigerator should be at 40 degrees Celsius or below and the freezer at 0 degree F or below.
- Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats within 2 days; other beef, veal, lamb, or pork within 3 to 5 days.
- Perishable food such as meat and poultry should be wrapped securely to maintain quality and to prevent meat juices from getting onto other food.
- To maintain quality when freezing meat and poultry in its original package, wrap the package again with foil or plastic wrap that is recommended for the freezer.
- In general, high acid canned food such as tomatoes, grapefruit, and pineapple can be stored on the shelf for 12 to 18 months. Low acid canned foods such as meat, poultry, fish, and most vegetables will keep 2 to 5 years. If the can remains in good condition and has been stored in a cool, clean and dry place. Discard cans that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted.

Preparation

- Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat, poultry, fish and their juices away from other food. After cutting raw meats, wash cutting board, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water.
- Cutting boards, utensils, and countertops can be sanitized by using a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water.
- Marinate meat and poultry in a covered dish in the refrigerator.

Thawing

- **Refrigerator:** The refrigerator allows slow, safe thawing. Make sure thawing meat and poultry juices do not drip onto other food.

- **Cold Water:** For faster thawing, place food in a leak-proof plastic bag. Submerge in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook immediately after thawing.
- **Microwave:** Cook meat and poultry immediately after microwave thawing.

Cooking

- Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops may be cooked to 145 degrees F.
- All cuts of pork, 160 degrees F
- Ground beef, veal and lamb to 160 degrees F
- All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees F.

Serving

- Hot food should be held at 140 degrees F or warmer.
- Cold food should be at 40 degrees F or colder.
- When serving food at a buffet, keep food hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays. Keep food cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice or use small serving trays and replace them often.
- Perishable food should not be left out more than 2 hours at room temperature (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 degrees F)

Leftovers

- Discard any food left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature was above 90 degree F).
- Place food into shallow containers and immediately put in the refrigerator or freezer for rapid cooling.
- Use cooked leftovers within 4 days

Refreezing

- Meat and poultry defrosted in the refrigerator may be refrozen before or after cooking. If thawed by other methods, cook before refreezing.

Cold Storage Chart

- These short, but safe, time limits will help keep refrigerated food from spoiling or becoming dangerous to eat. Because freezing keeps food safe indefinitely, recommended storage times are for quality only.

If the Power is Out

Freezer

- Without power, a full upright or chest freezer will keep everything frozen for about 2 days. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen 1 day.

- If power will be coming back on fairly soon, you can make the food last longer by keeping the door shut as much as possible.
- If the power will be off for an extended period, take food to friends' freezers, locate a commercial freezer or use dry ice.

Refrigerator/Freezer Combo

- Without power, the refrigerator section will keep food cool 4-6 hours depending on the kitchen temperature.
- A full, well functioning freezer unit should keep food frozen for 2 days. A half full freezer unit should keep things frozen about 1 day.
- Block ice can keep food on the refrigerator shelves cooler. Dry ice can be added to the freezer unit. You can't touch dry ice and you shouldn't breathe the fumes, so follow handling directions carefully.

What to do about thawed food

- Food still containing ice crystals or feels refrigerator-cold can be refrozen
- Discard any thawed food that has risen to room temperature and remained there 2 hours or more. Immediately discard anything with a strange color or odor.

Food Poisoning

- If you or a family member develops nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever or cramps, you could have food poisoning. Unfortunately, it's not always easy to tell since, depending on the illness, symptoms can appear anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 weeks later. Most often, though, people get sick within 4 to 48 hours after eating bad food.
- In most serious cases, food poisoning victims may have nervous system problems like paralysis, double vision or trouble swallowing or breathing.
- If symptoms are severe or the victim is very young, old, pregnant or already ill, call a doctor or go to the hospital right away.
- You or your physician should report serious causes of food borne illness to the local health department.
- Report any food poisoning incidents if the food involved came from a restaurant or commercial outlet.
- Give a detailed but short account of the incident. If the food is a commercial product, have it in hand so you can describe it.
- If you're asked to keep the food refrigerated so officials can examine it later, follow directions carefully.