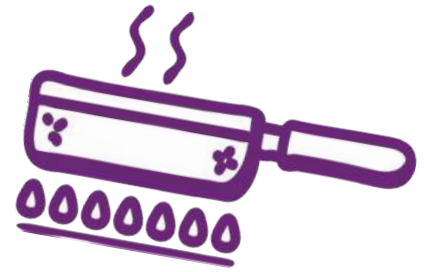


# Food Safety

Undercooked or mishandled meat, poultry, egg dishes, and vegetables can become a haven for pathogens that cause foodborne illnesses. Every year thousands of people in the US become ill after eating these foods. Here are some guidelines to help you avoid the risk.



## Wash hands and surfaces often

- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, and so on with hot, soapy water after preparing each item.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables with cold water before using.
- Never wash or rinse meat or poultry.

## Don't cross-contaminate

- Separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing, or storing.
- Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood.
- Do not reuse marinades or sauces that have held raw meat.

## Refrigerate food promptly and avoid the “danger zone”

- When serving, keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Avoid letting any food sit for more than 2 hours in the “danger zone,” between 40° and 140°. Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods, and leftovers within 2 hours, 1 hour if the environmental temperature is above 90°.
- To hold foods for extended periods of time, use a heat lamp or chafing dish for hot foods and ice for cold dishes.

## Cool food quickly

Hot foods improperly cooled for storage is one of the biggest sources of pathogen growth. Foods left out to cool for too long (more than 2 hours) can spend too much time in the “danger zone.” On the other hand, foods put into the fridge or freezer while too hot can cause other foods to warm up into the “danger zone.”

- Cool hot liquids (soups, stews) to a safe temperature quickly by putting them in a metal bowl or container and placing that container in an ice bath filled to the same height as liquid in the metal container and stir until temperature reaches 70°. Then refrigerate.
- Refrigerate semisolid and solid foods in a single layer in shallow containers to allow more surface exposure to the cold air.
- Large cuts of meat should be cut into smaller portions, cooled to room temperature, and then wrapped for refrigeration.
- Seal meat in a bag and place on a plate or in a bowl on the lowest shelf of your refrigerator in order to avoid leakage that could contaminate foods below.

## Cook food to the right temperatures

- The USDA recommends the following minimum internal temperatures:  
Beef, pork, veal, lamb steaks and roasts, fish—145°  
Ground beef, egg dishes (casseroles)—160°  
Poultry (chicken, turkey, duck), whole, ground, or pieces—165°
- Use an instant-read probe thermometer to reliably check doneness. These are available in the kitchen wares aisle of most grocery stores.

