USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

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.
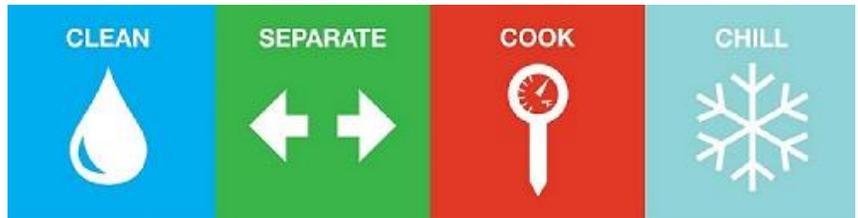
1. Clean

- **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**.
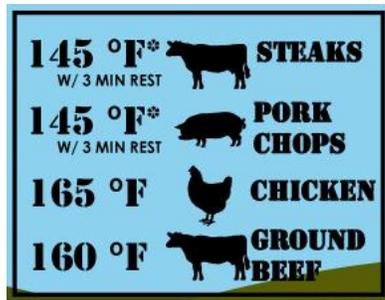
4. Chill

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.

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Food Storage Tips

	PANTRY	REFRIGERATOR	FREEZER
TEMP RANGE	Above freezing (32°F) and below 90°F	40°F or below (Retail fridges approx. 26°F)	0°F or below
TIPS	Safest at room temperature (60-70°F)	Don't store perishables in the refrigerator door	Safest to thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator
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

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service	U.S. Food and Drug Administration	State and Local Health Departments
USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline **1-888-MP-Hotline** (1-888-674-6854) M – F │ 10 AM – 6 PM ET https://ask.usda.gov/ Chat and FAQs available Email: MPHotline@usda.gov	**FDA Food Code (2017)** www.fda.gov/foodcode Also lists retail and food service codes and regulations **by State** **FDA Safe Food Hotline** **1-888-SAFEFOOD** M – F │ 10 AM – 4 PM ET https://www.fda.gov/food/resources-you-food/industry-and-consumer-assistance-cfsan	**Find your state agency:** https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html **OR** Search for your county's Environmental Health Dept.

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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