

There are four easy ways to keep food from going bad: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill

Clean: Wash hands, utensils, and cutting boards before and after contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.

- **Wash your hands with hot, soapy water.** Wash your hands before touching food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or touching pets.
- **Wash cutting boards, counters, dishes, and utensils with hot, soapy water.** Do this after working with each food item.
- **Use paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces.** If you use cloth towels, wash them often in the hot cycle of the washing machine or in hot, soapy water.

Separate: Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods such as fruits and vegetables.

- Keep these foods away from each other in your shopping cart and in your fridge.
- Use a separate cutting board for raw meat products and ready-to-eat foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Wash your hands after touching raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Wash cutting boards, surfaces, and utensils with hot, soapy water.
- Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood.

Cook: Use a food thermometer - **you can't tell food is cooked safely by how it looks!**

- Use a food thermometer which measures the internal temperature of cooked meat, poultry and egg dishes, to make sure that the food is cooked to a safe internal temperature.
- Cook roasts and steaks to at least 145°F.
- Whole poultry should reach 180°F.
- Cook ground beef to at least 160°F.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and whites are firm. Avoid using recipes in which eggs remain raw or are partly cooked.
- Cooked fish should flake easily with a fork.
- Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a boil when you reheat them. Leftovers should reach 165°F when reheated.
- Be careful if you use a microwave oven. Follow microwave instructions for foods to ensure adequate cooking. Make sure that the food has no cold spots since cold spots let disease causing pathogens live. Cover the food and stir it for even cooking. Rotate the dish once or twice while cooking.

Chill: Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful disease causing pathogens.

- Set your fridge to 40°F or colder. The freezer should be kept at 0°F. Check the readings once a month with a fridge thermometer.
- Put all cooked and leftover food in the fridge or freezer within two hours.
- **Never thaw food by simply taking it out of the fridge!** There are three safe ways to thaw food:
 - ◇ In the refrigerator
 - ◇ Under cold running water
 - ◇ In the microwave according to directions for the food
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator.
- Divide large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow dishes with covers so they can cool quickly in the refrigerator.
- Don't pack the refrigerator too full. The cool air must flow freely to keep food safe.

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Acute Disease Service

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