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SP713 Be Food Safe - Four Easy Steps for Safe Food Handling

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

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United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

UT Extension

SP713



Harmful Bacteria
Can Make People Sick.

Four Easy Steps for Safe Food Handling



Follow These Four Easy Steps to

Clean. Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get on hands, cutting boards, knives and countertops. Frequent cleaning can keep that from happening.



WASH hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Twenty seconds is about the length of time it would take you to sing the Happy Birthday song twice.

WASH cutting boards and utensils in the dishwasher or in hot soapy water after each use.



KEEP countertops and utensils clean by washing with hot soapy water after preparing food.

Separate. Cross-contamination is how bacteria spreads. Keep raw meat, poultry and seafood and their juices away from ready-to-eat food.



USE one cutting board for raw meat, poultry and seafood and another for salads and ready-to-eat foods.

KEEP raw meat, poultry and seafood and their juices apart from other food items in your grocery cart.



STORE raw meat, poultry and seafood in a food storage bag, container or on a plate so juices can't drip on other foods.

To learn more, visit [www.fda.gov](#)

Help Your Family Be Food Safe.

Cook. Even for experienced cooks, the improper heating and preparation of food means bacteria can survive.



USE a food thermometer—you can't tell food is cooked safely by how it looks.

STIR, rotate the dish and cover food when microwaving to prevent cold spots where bacteria can survive.



BRING sauces, soups and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating.



Chill. Bacteria spreads fastest at temperatures between 40 °F - 140 °F, so chilling food properly is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of food-borne illness.



COOL the refrigerator to 40 degrees F or below, and use an appliance thermometer to check the temperature.

CHILL leftovers and takeout foods within two hours, and divide food into shallow containers for rapid cooling.



THAW meat, poultry and seafood in the fridge, not at room temperature.



Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces often.



Don't cross-contaminate.



Use a food thermometer.



Chill food promptly.

Be Food Safe™ was developed by USDA and the Partnership for Food Safety Education. Food safety information is available by calling the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHHotline.

Safe Food for Tennessee

Food safety education is provided in your community by University of Tennessee Extension, Family and Consumer Sciences.

Contact your local Extension office:

Adapted from USDA/FSIS materials by Janie Burney, Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences.

Visit the UT Extension Web site at
<http://www.utextension.utk.edu/>

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