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Safe Kitchen Rules

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Food Safety

Fact Sheet

Safe Kitchen Rules

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Bacteria which cause food poisoning can be controlled by keeping food hot.

- 165°–212° F temperature kills most bacteria.
- 140°–165° F holding temperatures prevent bacteria growth.
- Two hours maximum holding time.
- Cook meat and poultry thoroughly—at least to medium (140° F).
- Don't interrupt cooking—cook thoroughly.
- Frozen food should be cooked about 1½ times the normal cooking time.
- Thoroughly reheat leftovers.

Cold temperatures prevent bacterial growth.

- Refrigeration temperatures should be 40° F or lower.
- Freezing temperatures should be 0° F or lower.
- When shopping, pick up perishables last, take directly home, and refrigerate immediately.
- Handle meat and poultry as little as possible—leave in store wrap.
- Check canned meat products—some require refrigeration.
- Fresh poultry, hamburger and variety meats should be kept no more than 1–2 days; other meats for 3–5 days.
- Frozen meats should be well wrapped to prevent drying out, and stored no more than 6–12 months.
- The safest thawing technique is in the refrigerator.
- For faster thawing place food in plastic bag and put in cold water.
- Thawing in the microwave is rapid enough to control bacterial growth.
- Never leave food at room temperature more than 2 hours, including preparation, cooking and serving time.
- Place all leftovers immediately in refrigerator.

- Place large amounts of food in shallow containers to refrigerate.

Select only safe food.

- Frozen foods should be solid.
- Refrigerated food should feel cool.
- Check dates on products.
- The “sell by” date is the date product is to be taken off the shelf.
- The “use by” date is the maximum date which will still be top eating quality.

Keep food clean.

- Store food in appropriate place, refrigerator, freezer or clean, dry place.
- Keep pets away from food.
- Store household cleaners away from food.
- Control household pests (rats, mice, roaches).
- Always wash hands before food preparation.
- Teach children to wash hands.
- Avoid contact with food if you have a cut or infection on your hand.
- Do not cough or sneeze on food.
- Keep dish cloths and towels clean.
- Use soapy water to wash hands, counter tops and utensils.
- Do not put cooked food on dishes, board or counter tops where raw food has been.

Safe microwave cooking.

- Allow standing time (10–15 minutes) for even heating of food.
- Use meat thermometer to check for doneness.
- Covers, lids and cooking bags give more even cooking temperatures.
- Never use microwave for home canning.

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