DISCOVER THE POWER OF NUTRITION

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH® 2026

Feel Good with Food Safety

Choosing a variety of healthy foods from all the food groups is important to help power your day. But healthy habits don't end there. Practicing food safety is also important to reduce your risk of foodborne illness. Follow these home food safety tips to help you and others avoid getting sick.

Soap Up

Wash your hands with soap and water.
Handwashing is an easy and effective way to prevent the spread of germs. Wash your hands with soap and clean water for at least 20 seconds before handling, preparing or eating food, including when feeding others.

Keep kitchen surfaces and utensils clean.
Countertops, cutting boards, utensils, sinks and appliances, like your fridge and microwave, are some of the items in your kitchen that need to be cleaned regularly. Make a habit of wiping these areas down with hot, soapy water after preparing food or when it spills.

Replace sponges every one to two weeks.
Damp sponges can be microwaved daily for one minute to help reduce the bacteria content. However, they should be replaced regularly, too.

Prevent Cross-Contamination

Use separate tools for raw and ready-to-eat foods.
Cross-contamination occurs when harmful bacteria are spread from one surface to another. One way this occurs is by using the same cutting board or utensils to prepare raw meat, fish or poultry and then reusing the same board or utensils for ready-to-eat foods, like fruits and vegetables. Avoid this by cleaning utensils thoroughly between use, or better yet, using separate tools.

Refrigerate raw meat, fish and poultry on the bottom shelf.
Keeping these foods on the bottom shelf in your refrigerator helps to prevent their juices from dripping on other foods. You can also store these items in a bowl or on a plate to help catch any liquids.

Get a Temperature Check

Invest in a food thermometer.
Food thermometers are the only way to ensure food is cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature. The recommended temperature varies depending on the food.

- Fish: 145°F
- Whole cuts of meat: 145°F, then rest for 3 minutes before carving or eating
- Ground meats: 160°F
- Egg dishes: 160°F
- Poultry: 165°F
- Casseroles, mixed dishes and leftovers: 165°F

Watch the Clock

Don't let food sit out for more than one to two hours.
Bacteria grow quickly when perishable foods are left in the temperature danger zone (40°F and 140°F). Make sure these foods are refrigerated right away or not left out more than two hours. If the temperature is above 90°F, limit this to one hour, as bacteria multiply even faster.

Stay on top of what's in your refrigerator.
If you tend to forget about leftovers, labeling when they were made can help. Plan to eat leftovers within three to four days or freeze for later use

Proceed with Caution

Certain groups of people are at a higher risk of serious side effects from foodborne illness. This includes individuals with a compromised immune system, children, older adults and individuals who are pregnant. These groups should avoid high-risk foods such as raw or unpasteurized dairy products, raw or undercooked eggs, raw sprouts and undercooked or raw meat, poultry and seafood.

Find Nutrition Advice Backed by Science

Registered dietitian nutritionists, also known as RDNs, are food and nutrition experts who help people live healthier lives.

To find a registered dietitian nutritionist in your area and get additional food and nutrition information, **visit eatright.org.**

eat right® Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

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