

Five keys to safer food



1. Keep clean

- Wash your hands before handling food and often during food preparation.
- Wash your hands after going to the toilet.
- Keep your cooking space and your cooking tools clean.
- Keep insects, pests and other animals away from your cooking space.

Why

Germs are everywhere around us. Most of them do not cause disease, but some can make us sick. Some of these dangerous germs are in our hands, in the wiping cloths, the cutting boards and other utensils we use to prepare food. If these are not well cleaned, the germs can easily transfer to food and make people sick.



2. Separate raw and cooked

- Avoid contact between raw and cooked foods by storing them in separate containers.
- Use different knives and cutting boards for raw foods and cooked foods.

Why

Well cooked foods are normally safe to eat. However, raw food, especially meat, poultry and seafood, and their juices, can contain dangerous germs which may be transferred onto cooked foods during food preparation and storage. Try to avoid contact between cooked and raw foods to avoid this sharing of germs.

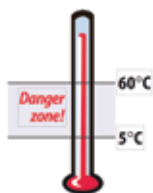


3. Cook thoroughly

- Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, eggs and seafood.
- Cook foods like soups and stew until boiling.
- Make sure that food gets very hot if you reheat already cooked food.

Why

When we cook food we kill most germs. Cooking foods at high temperature (until boiling, for water or milk) and well (especially meat), makes them safer to consume. Minced meats, large pieces of meat or whole poultry require special attention and should be well cooked.



4. Keep food at safe temperatures

- If possible, keep raw and cooked foods in a fridge.
- If you don't have a fridge, keep foods in a cool place and consume cooked foods within 2 hours from preparation.

Why

Germs in foods can multiply very quickly when foods are not kept in the cold. The fridge, or spaces with low temperatures, slow down the multiplication of many, but not all, germs. Other types of conservation, including salting or drying, also reduce the germs in foods.



5. Use safe water and raw materials

- Drink and cook with clean water.
- If needed, treat your water (by boiling, filtering or by other local means) to make it safe.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before consumption, especially if you eat them raw.
- Consume wholesome foods as fresh as possible.

Why

Raw materials, including water and ice, may be contaminated with dangerous germs and chemicals. Toxic chemicals may be present in damaged and mouldy foods. Care in selection of raw materials and washing and peeling may reduce the risk.