

Keeping Food Safe for You and Your Family

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RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System



Expanded Food and
Nutrition Education
Program



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School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences

During and After Shopping

- Make grocery shopping the last thing to do when running errands.
- If you live a good distance from the grocery store, make sure you take a cooler and purchase ice for those perishables.
- When at the store, separate meats from fruits and vegetables in the shopping cart. Make sure raw meat and poultry doesn't drip on fruits and vegetables or other foods.
- Check the dates on the packages of foods to make sure the food is still safe.
- Check cans for leaks, bulges, rust or dents.
- Make sure that "safety buttons" on jars are still in the down position (jars of baby food have safety buttons).
- Check to make sure the seals on packages are still intact.
- Make sure refrigerated foods are cold to the touch and frozen foods are solid.
- Take food home right away and store it quickly and properly. Put refrigerated and frozen foods away first.

During Preparation

- Make sure you wash your hands with warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers or handling pets.
- Always use a clean cutting board.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils and countertops with hot water and soap after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs.
- Never thaw foods at room temperature.
- Wash plates between uses or use separate plates: one for holding raw meat, poultry or seafood and another for cooked foods.
- Place washed produce into clean storage containers, never return produce to original containers.
- Be aware of the tools used during cooking – never use the same knife for raw meat, poultry or seafood to chop produce or ready-to-eat foods.
- Use one cutting board for meat, poultry and seafood. Also use separate cutting boards for produce and ready-to-eat foods.

During and After the Meal

- Always use a clean plate.
- Never place cooked food on the same plate or cutting board that previously held raw food.
- Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within two hours or sooner in clean, shallow, covered containers to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying. In hot weather (90°F or above), this time is reduced to one hour.
- Make sure your refrigerator is set below 40°F. This will keep perishable foods out of what's called the “danger zone” 40°F or above. Keep a refrigerator thermometer inside your refrigerator at all times!
- Freezing is also a smart storage option to extend to shelf life of many perishable foods. Use an appliance thermometer to ensure your freezer is at 0°Fahrenheit or below.
- Wash dishcloths and towels often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.
- Disinfect sponges in a chlorine bleach solution.
- Replace worn sponges frequently.

Important Rule of Thumb: WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!!!!

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References

Food Safety and the Consumer Leader Training Guide, Easter H. Tucker, University of Arkansas.
Eating Smart Being Active, Colorado State University.



United States Department of Agriculture, University of Arkansas, and County Governments Cooperating

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