



FOOD SAFETY: PREPARATION

To reduce the risk of food poisoning while preparing food, follow the simple steps below.

Wash Your Hands Often

Wash your hands before, during, and after food preparation, and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets and pet waste.

- ▶ Wash hands in warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds, lathering the backs of hands, between fingers, and under fingernails. Rinse hands well under running water and dry them with a clean towel or air dry them.
- ▶ Wash your hands after you handle raw eggs, meat, poultry, or fish.

KEEP A CLEAN CUTTING BOARD

Most types of cutting boards can be washed and put in the dishwasher, but wooden and bamboo boards cannot. (Check the manufacturer's directions for your board.)

Follow these 4 steps to clean your cutting board by hand:

1. Use a clean sponge or dish cloth to wash the cutting board in hot, soapy water.
2. Rinse the board well with clean, hot water.
3. Sanitize the board: Mix 1 tablespoon of bleach with 1 gallon water. Cover the surfaces of the cutting board with the bleach-water mixture and let it sit for several minutes. Rinse the board with clean water.
4. Dry the board in a dish drainer or with a paper towel before using or storing it. Don't dry with a dish towel because it can spread bacteria to the clean cutting board.

Keep Ready-to-Eat Foods Separate from Raw Meat, Poultry, Seafood, and Eggs

Cross-contamination occurs when juices from raw meats or bacteria from unclean objects accidentally touch cooked or ready-to-eat foods. Here's how to prevent it:

- ▶ Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from ready-to-eat foods such as fruits and salads.
- ▶ Use 2 cuttings boards: 1 only for raw meat, poultry, and seafood and 1 for ready-to-eat foods such as bread, cheese, fruits, and vegetables. To keep track, buy different color boards for different types of foods.
- ▶ Thoroughly wash cutting boards between uses. Refer to **Keep a Clean Cutting Board** for step-by-step tips.
- ▶ Don't use the same utensils, appliances, dishware, or cutting boards to prepare raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs and cooked or ready-to-eat foods unless you thoroughly wash these items in hot, soapy water first.

TEMPERATURE MATTERS

Use a dial or digital food thermometer to make sure foods reach safe internal temperatures. Here's how:

- ▶ Toward the end of the expected cooking time, place the bottom 2 inches of the food thermometer in the thickest part of the food. Don't let the thermometer touch bone, fat, or gristle in meat or poultry.
- ▶ Allow the temperature to register on the thermometer. Wait for the arrow on a dial thermometer to stop moving before you read the temperature.
- ▶ Make sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature (see below).
- ▶ If the food is not at or above the minimum internal temperature, let it cook longer.
- ▶ Recheck with the thermometer until the food reaches a safe temperature.
- ▶ Wash thermometers with hot, soapy water before and after each use.

Food	Minimum Internal Temp.
Ground beef, pork, lamb, or veal	160°F
Roasts, steaks, chops (beef, pork, veal, or lamb)	145°F
Poultry (whole, pieces, or ground)	165°F
Fresh ham (not precooked)	145°F
Precooked ham (to reheat)	140°F
Stuffing and stuffed meats	165°F
Fish	145°F
Egg dishes	160°F
Leftovers	165°F

Cook to Proper Temperatures

Cook fish, seafood, meat, poultry, and egg dishes to the recommended safe minimum internal temperature to destroy any potentially harmful bacteria.

- ▶ Always use a food thermometer to check the doneness of meat, poultry, seafood, and dishes containing eggs. Refer to the **Temperature Matters** sidebar for tips on using a food thermometer and a list of safe internal temperatures for a variety of foods.
- ▶ If a marinade was used on raw meat, boil it for several minutes if you plan to reuse it as a sauce. Or consider reserving some of the marinade before using it on the meat to serve with the finished dish.
- ▶ To reduce the risk of food-borne illness, older adults and pregnant women should heat all deli-style meats before eating.

Keep Foods Out of the Temperature Danger Zone

Do not allow raw or cooked foods to stay in the "danger zone" of 40°F to 140°F for more than 2 hours. This is the temperature range at which bacteria can multiply quickly.

- ▶ Thaw frozen foods like meat, poultry, or seafood in the refrigerator, not on the counter.
- ▶ Keep hot foods piping hot until serving and keep cold foods very cold. Don't let foods get lukewarm.
- ▶ To help prevent bacteria from growing, refrigerate perishable leftovers within 2 hours. Refrigerate leftovers within 1 hour if they have been sitting out at a temperature of 90°F or warmer, such as at picnics or cookouts.