

If you have any questions, please ask your nurse or dietitian.

Food Safety: A Guide for People With Weakened Immune Systems

Food safety is an important part of your care. Some treatments or health conditions can weaken the body's immune system and make it more difficult for the body to fight against infection or disease. The following recommendations are provided to help you prevent food-borne illness.

Food safety guidelines

Dairy products

- Buy only pasteurized milk, cheese, yogurt and ice cream.
- Avoid cheeses from the deli.
- Avoid cheese made with unpasteurized (raw) milk, as well as all blue-veined cheeses.

Meats, eggs and fish

- Avoid all raw fish, shellfish and seafood such as oysters, ceviche and sushi.
- Heat all deli meats and hotdogs until steaming before eating.
- Avoid refrigerated smoked fish, such as lox. Canned or shelf-stable smoked seafood is OK.

Fruits and vegetables

- Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water, including any skins that will be peeled before cooking or eating.
- Buy only pasteurized fruit and vegetable juices.
- Avoid buying pre-cut fruits or vegetables at the grocery store or at restaurants.
- Do not eat raw vegetable sprouts.

Other foods

- Cook or reheat tofu, tempeh and miso until steaming.
- Avoid raw tempeh or miso products.
- Eat only pasteurized honey.
- Avoid eating raw flour such as in raw dough or batter.
- Avoid well water unless it is tested yearly and OK to drink or use.

Stay clean

- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds before and after preparing food, and before eating. Rinse your hands thoroughly with clean water and towel dry.

- Wash utensils, cutting boards and counter tops with hot, soapy water.
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before peeling or cutting. Do not use soaps, detergents or bleach solutions for washing produce.

Separate food and utensils

- Use separate cutting boards for raw meat, fish and poultry from other foods.
- Keep raw meat, fish and poultry separate in a plastic bag in the grocery cart.
- Always marinate food in the refrigerator. Sauce that is used to marinate raw meat should not be used again on cooked foods.
- Never place cooked food back on the same plate that held the raw food.

Cooking foods

Be sure to cook meat, poultry, eggs and seafood thoroughly by using a meat thermometer.

Safe Minimum Cooking Temperatures

Food	Type	Internal Temperature (degrees F)
Ground meat and meat mixtures	Beef, pork, veal, lamb	160
	Turkey, chicken	165
Fresh beef, veal, lamb	Steaks, roasts, chops Rest time: 3 minutes	145
Poultry	All poultry (breasts, whole bird, legs, thighs, wings, ground poultry, giblets, and stuffing)	165
Pork and ham	Fresh pork, including fresh ham Rest time: 3 minutes	145
	Precooked ham (to reheat) Note: Reheat cooked hams packaged in USDA-inspected plants to 140 degrees F	165
Eggs and egg dishes	Eggs	Cook until yolk and white are firm
	Egg dishes (such as frittata, quiche)	160
Leftovers and casseroles	All	165
Seafood	Fish with fins	145 or cook until flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork
	Shrimp, lobster, crab, scallops	Cook until flesh is pearly or white, and opaque
	Clams, oysters, mussels	Cook until shells open during cooking

Keeping foods cold

- Keep your refrigerator temperature below 40 degrees F.
- Never thaw meat, fish or poultry on the counter at room temperature. Thaw in the microwave, in the refrigerator or in water that is changed every 30 minutes.
- Put perishable foods in the fridge within 2 hours of serving. Eggs or dairy-based foods should not be left out for more than 1 hour.
- Use defrosted foods right away and do not refreeze them.
- Check dates on packages carefully. Throw out any outdated products and any moldy foods.

Tips for eating out

- Avoid delis, buffets, salad bars and street vendors.
- Only buy prepared items that can be reheated to 165 degrees F before eating.
- Cooked foods are safest when eating at restaurants.
- Do not eat raw fruits and vegetables when eating out at restaurants.
- Use caution at family-style or potluck-style meals.