

Food Safety When Cooking

Food-related illness can be serious, especially for older adults. To be safe, be very careful about how your food is prepared and stored. When cooking, follow 4 basic steps: clean, separate, cook, and chill.

1. Clean. Wash your hands and the counter with hot, soapy water, and make sure utensils are clean before you start. Clean can lids before opening. Rinse fruits and vegetables under running water; do not rinse raw meat or poultry before cooking.

2. Separate. Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (and their juices and shells) away from foods that won't be cooked. Use a different knife and cutting board for fresh produce than you use for raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Or, cut the fresh produce first, then wash utensils and cutting board in hot soapy water, and clean the counter and your hands before moving on to cutting up meat. If you put raw meat on a plate, wash the plate in hot soapy water before reusing it for cooked food.

3. Cook. Put a food thermometer in the thickest part of the food you're cooking to check that the inside has reached the right temperature:

- 145° F for meats and seafood
- 160° F for ground meats and egg dishes
- 165° F for poultry, hot dogs, and luncheon meats

No more runny fried eggs or hamburgers that are pink in the middle! Bring sauces, marinades, soups, and gravy to a boil when reheating.

4. Chill. Keep your refrigerator at 40° F and your freezer at 0° F or below. Put food in the refrigerator within 2 hours of buying or cooking it. If the outside temperature is over 90° F, refrigerate food within 1 hour.



Quick Tip

Don't wait until they cool! Put hot foods in the refrigerator as soon as possible to keep bacteria from growing.

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- Try the strength, balance, and flexibility exercises.

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- For more ideas on healthy eating, read *What's on Your Plate?*



National Institute on Aging