



## Food Safety Tips

*Adapted from information provided by Johns Hopkins. Printed and distributed with written permission.*

Hardly a month goes by without a news report of people getting sick from bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens in food. While there's nothing you can do about food contamination that occurs at the level of the farm or processing plant, you can take steps to protect yourself once the food is in your hands.

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### **Fifteen tips to help protect yourself from foodborne illnesses:**

1. Pay attention to news reports about contaminated foods, and do not eat anything under suspicion.
2. Wash produce well, especially if it will be eaten raw. Produce with inedible peels (like melons) should be washed, too, to prevent pathogens on the peel from contaminating the flesh inside.
3. Before and after handling food, wash your hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds - about as long as it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.
4. Use one cutting board and set of utensils for raw meat, fish, and poultry, and another cutting board and set of utensils for produce.
5. Use hot, soapy water to wash cutting boards, dishes, and utensils that have come in contact with raw meat, fish, eggs, or poultry.
6. Separate raw meat, seafood, eggs, and poultry from other foods in your shopping cart, grocery bags and refrigerator.
7. Cook meat, seafood, and poultry adequately. Take special care with ground meat, which is especially likely to harbor pathogens. Eggs should be cooked until the yolk is firm.
8. Do not place cooked meat, seafood, eggs, or poultry on the same plate that held the raw version.
9. Store food properly. When you buy raw meat, seafood, eggs and poultry, refrigerate them as soon as you get home from the store.
10. Refrigerate foods within two hours of cooking. Never allow meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or other foods that require refrigeration to sit out for more than two hours.
11. Keep your refrigerator temperature at or below 40 degrees F and your freezer below 0 degrees F, because cold temperatures help stop organisms from multiplying.
12. If a restaurant serves you undercooked meat (especially hamburger or chicken), send it back for more cooking. Ask that all other food on the plate also be replaced.
13. Avoid unpasteurized milk, unpasteurized dairy products and unpasteurized juices.
14. Do not eat food that is spoiled, moldy, or smelly. If in doubt, throw it out.
15. Discard old food. Check package labels for recommended storage time limits.

*This information is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical guidance.  
Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider prior to making decisions about your medical care.*