
Guideline 7:

Clean Kitchen, Healthy Body: A Practical Guide to Safe Cooking & Eating

Why Food Safety Is Non-Negotiable

❖ **What's at Stake?**

- Foodborne diseases such as **typhoid, hepatitis A, and diarrheal infections** are common in India and linked to unsafe food handling.
- ICMR highlights contaminated food as a **major cause of child malnutrition**, especially due to repeated gut infections.

❖ **Core Hygiene Practices:**

- Wash hands with soap **before cooking, eating**, and after toilet use.
- Avoid food from **unlicensed vendors** and check for expiry dates.
- Use **potable water** for drinking, cooking, and washing produce.

❖ **For Your Nutri Guide Visuals:**

- Use icons for handwashing, clean kitchen, and safe packaging.
- Add tooltips with quick facts like “Did you know unsafe water accounts for 50% of diarrheal cases in children?”

Smart Kitchen Hygiene—Cook Clean, Stay Safe

❖ **Four Golden Rules** (*based on WHO's food safety pillars*):

1. **Clean:** Wash hands, produce, and surfaces regularly.
2. **Separate:** Raw meats, eggs, and dairy shouldn't touch ready-to-eat foods.
3. **Cook:** Heat thoroughly—meat $\geq 70^{\circ}\text{C}$, leftovers $\geq 65^{\circ}\text{C}$.
4. **Chill:** Refrigerate within 2 hours at $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$.

❖ **Kitchen Workflow Tips:**

- Use **color-coded chopping boards**.

- Clean sponges and cloths daily with boiling water.
- Don't refreeze thawed meats.

Healthy Cooking Techniques to Maximize Nutrition

❖ Preferred Methods:

- **Steaming, boiling, baking, grilling** retain nutrients better than frying.
- Cooking legumes and grains after soaking reduces **anti-nutrients** (like phytic acid).

❖ Oil & Salt Wisdom:

- Use **cold-pressed oils**, preferably groundnut, mustard, or sunflower.
- Avoid reused or overheated oils—can form **trans fats**.
- Limit salt to **<5g/day**; use herbs, garlic, and spices for flavor.

❖ Avoid Harmful Practices:

- Burning or charring foods can release **carcinogens**.
- Don't use aluminum vessels for acidic foods—opt for steel or glass.

Common Kitchen Mistakes & Better Alternatives

❖ Red Flag Habits:

- Thawing meats at room temperature → encourages bacterial growth.
- Leaving leftovers uncovered → prone to cross-contamination.
- Cooking with unfiltered water → risk of waterborne diseases.

❖ ICMR-Recommended Fixes:

- Thaw in the **fridge or microwave**.
- Cover food with **cloth or cling wrap**.
- Use **boiled or RO-filtered water** for cooking.

❖ Bonus Safety Tips:

- Avoid cooking for others when ill.
- Check refrigerator temperature periodically.
- Never store food in plastic containers with hot contents.

How to safely use cookware?

Earthen pots

These are the safest cookware. When using earthen pots, very little oil is required. They are environment-friendly and keep the food's nutritional content intact. Heat can circulate through the food in earthen pots, preserving the nutrition.



Metal cookware

We use a variety of cookware, which are made of different materials. Some of these materials like aluminum, iron, brass or copper can enter the food when we cook or store food in them. Storing acidic foods like pickles, chutneys, sambar, sauces in aluminum, iron, unlined brass or copper vessels will make foods unsafe.



Stainless steel cookware

These are generally considered safe for cooking purposes if used properly. It is widely used in kitchens around the world due to its various benefits, including its durability, resistance to corrosion, and non-reactivity with foods. It doesn't leach or react with acidic or alkaline foods, which means it is unlikely to impart metallic flavors or harmful substances to cooked foods.



Non-stick pans coated with polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) (Teflon)

Non-stick pans coated with teflon are a risk if they are heated to temperatures greater than 170°C. This might happen if an empty pan is left on a burner for a long time. In this case, the coatings can give off irritating or poisonous fumes. The usage and cleaning instructions should be strictly followed for non-stick cookware, and they should be discarded when the coating is worn-out or damaged.



Granite stone cookware

These cookware nowadays are substantially lighter than granite stone cookware from earlier generations. Granite stone cookware save time and energy. These cookware also retain heat well, even after the heat source is turned off. Unless the cookware contains teflon coating such as Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and polytetra-fluoroethylene (PTFE), it is regarded as safe. When using granite cookware, set the cookware's temperature to a maximum of medium-high, as the non-stick coating gets damaged at a high temperature. The non-stick coating will be protected at medium-high heat.



Checklist + “Healthy Kitchen Challenge” Tracker

Practice	What to Look For	Frequency
<i>Wash hands & utensils</i>	Use soap, scrub for ≥20 seconds	Before & after meals
<i>Safe cooking temperature</i>	Use meat thermometer: chicken >70°C	Every cooked meal
<i>Refrigeration</i>	Store food ≤5°C, label with dates	Within 2 hours
<i>Avoid cross-contamination</i>	Separate boards & knives for meat vs veg	Daily routine
<i>Clean water usage</i>	RO/boiled for prep & cooking	Always