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Food poisoning prevention

This article explains safe ways to prepare and store food to prevent food poisoning. It includes tips about what foods to avoid, eating outside of your home, such as at restaurants, and traveling.

TIPS FOR COOKING OR PREPARING FOOD:

- Carefully wash your hands before preparing or serving food.
- Cook eggs until they are solid, not runny.
- Do not eat raw ground beef, chicken, eggs, or fish.
- Heat all casseroles to 165°F (73.9°C).
- Hotdogs and luncheon meats should be heated to steaming.
- If you take care of young children, wash your hands often and dispose of diapers carefully so bacteria do not spread to food surfaces where food is prepared.
- Use only clean dishes and utensils.
- Use a thermometer when cooking beef to at least 160°F (71.1°C), poultry to at least 180°F (82.2°C), or fish to at least 140°F (60°C).

TIPS FOR STORING FOOD:

- Do not use foods that have an unusual odor or spoiled taste.
- Do not place cooked meat or fish back onto the same plate or container that held the raw meat, unless the container has been thoroughly washed.
- Do not use outdated foods, packaged foods with broken seals, or cans that are bulging or dented.
- If you can your own foods at home, be sure to follow proper canning techniques to prevent botulism.
- Keep the refrigerator set to 40°F (4.4°C) and your freezer at or below 0°F (-17.7°C).
- Promptly refrigerate any food you will not be eating.

MORE TIPS FOR PREVENTING FOOD POISONING:

- All milk, yogurt, cheese, and other dairy products should have the word "Pasteurized" on the container.
- Do not eat foods that may contain raw eggs (such as Caesar salad dressing, raw cookie dough, eggnog, and hollandaise sauce).
- Do not eat raw honey. Only eat honey that has been heat-treated.

- NEVER give honey to children under 1 year of age.
- Do not eat soft cheeses (such as queso blanco fresco).
- Do not eat raw vegetable sprouts (such as alfalfa sprouts).
- Do not eat shellfish that have been exposed to red tide.
- Wash all raw fruits, vegetables, and herbs with cold running water.

TIPS FOR EATING OUT SAFELY:

- Ask if all fruit juices have been pasteurized.
- Be careful at salad bars, buffets, sidewalk vendors, potluck meals, and delicatessens. Make sure cold foods are kept cold and hot foods are kept hot.
- Use only salad dressings, sauces, and salsas that come in single-serving packages.

TIPS FOR TRAVELING WHERE CONTAMINATION IS COMMON:

- Do not eat raw vegetables or unpeeled fruit.
- Do not add ice to your drinks unless you know it was made with clean or boiled water.
- Drink only boiled water.
- Eat only hot, freshly cooked food.

If you become sick after eating, and other people you know may have eaten the same food, let them know you got sick. If you think the food was contaminated when you bought it from a store or restaurant, tell the store or restaurant and your local health department.

For more detailed information please see Food - hygiene and sanitation or the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service website -- www.fsis.usda.gov [<https://www.fsis.usda.gov>] .

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