



Government of Canada Gouvernement du Canada

Safe Food Handling **For Children Ages 5 & Under**



Canada 

Food Safety Information **For Children Ages 5 & Under**

Children ages five and under are at an increased risk for complications from food poisoning (foodborne illness).

This is because their immune systems are still developing and they are unable to fight off infection as well as adults can. Young children also produce less of the stomach acid that kills harmful bacteria, which makes it easier for them to get sick.

What are the symptoms and complications that can develop from foodborne illness?

Symptoms can vary from mild stomach ache, vomiting, diarrhea and fever/chills to extremely severe illness requiring hospitalization.

Foodborne illness in young children can also lead to dehydration as their bodies are smaller and they can lose a high percentage of body fluid very quickly.

Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome

Young children exposed to the bacteria *E. coli* O157:H7 can develop *Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome*, a type of kidney failure and blood disorder that can be fatal. To prevent this illness, it is extremely important to cook ground beef (e.g. hamburgers) to 71°C and always wash young children's hands before eating and after visiting a petting zoo or farm.



Separate

Infant Botulism

Do not give honey to a baby under one year of age – it can cause a serious type of food poisoning called *infant botulism*. Infant botulism is caused by bacteria called *Clostridium botulinum*, which commonly exists in nature. If an infant swallows honey contaminated with spores of the bacteria, the spores may grow and produce toxins in the baby's body and could cause paralysis. Healthy children over one year of age can safely eat honey as their risk of developing infant botulism is very low.

Clean

Chill

The way food is stored, handled and prepared at home or at a caregiver's facility plays a critical role in our families' food safety.

You can protect your children, and your family, from foodborne illness by following the food safety advice outlined in this booklet.

Cook

Food to avoid



Temperatures

Separate

Separate raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood from other food in your grocery cart and in your refrigerator. This is to ensure that you are not cross-contaminating your food.

Heat and proper cooking can kill bacteria. But, people often eat raw fruit and vegetables. Because they are not heated or cooked, raw fruit and vegetables that have been contaminated by raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood may contain bacteria that can be harmful to you and others.

Shopping

- Buy cold or frozen food at the end of your shopping.
- Keep your raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood away from other food in your grocery cart, so you don't spread food-borne bacteria from raw food to ready-to-eat food.
- Put raw food in individual plastic bags (found in the produce section and at some meat counters) and pack them separately in your reusable grocery bags.
- If you use reusable grocery bags or bins, make sure to use a specific bag or bin specifically for raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood. Label the bag or bin with the type of food it carries.





Separate

Clean

Refrigerator storage



Chill

- Keep your raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood separate from other food in your refrigerator. Do this by storing them in different containers.
- Place raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator so raw juices won't drip onto other food.

Cook

Tip:

To help prevent foodborne illness, avoid spreading liquids from packages onto other foods, cutting boards, utensils, dishes and food preparation surfaces.

Food to avoid

Temperatures

Clean

Properly cleaning your hands, kitchen surfaces and utensils, fruit and vegetables and reusable grocery bags will help eliminate bacteria and reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Hands

- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds. Washing your hands prevents bacteria from transferring from your hands to food or surfaces.
- You should always wash your hands:
 - ◆ before and after you touch raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood;
 - ◆ after using the washroom;
 - ◆ after handling pets; or
 - ◆ after changing diapers.



Fresh fruit and vegetables

- Wash your fresh fruit and vegetables gently under cool, running, drinkable water before serving or cooking them.
- Use a vegetable scrub brush on produce that have a firm skin, such as carrots, potatoes, melons and squash.
- Don't soak your fresh fruit and vegetables in a sink full of water because the sink can harbour bacteria that can transfer to the fresh produce.
- It isn't necessary to use anything other than water to wash your produce.





Kitchen surfaces and utensils

- If you have used a plate or utensils to handle raw food, don't use them again until they have been washed thoroughly in the dishwasher or in warm, soapy water. Alternatively, use clean plates and utensils.
- You may want to use the following solution to help sanitize surfaces and utensils:
 - ◆ Combine 5 mL (1 tsp) of bleach with 750 mL (3 cups) of water in a labelled spray bottle.
 - ◆ Spray the bleach solution on the surface/utensil and let stand briefly.
 - ◆ Rinse with plenty of clean, drinkable running water and air dry (or use clean towels).

Reusable grocery bags

Wash your reusable grocery bags frequently, especially if you are carrying raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood.



Clean

Chill

Cook

Food to avoid

Temperatures

Chill

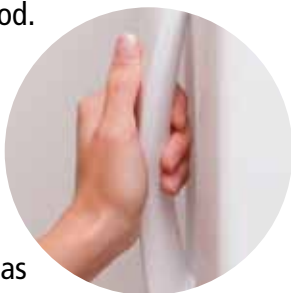
It is extremely important to keep cold food cold and hot food hot so that your food never reaches the “temperature danger zone.” That is where bacteria can grow quickly and cause foodborne illness.

Defrosting

- Defrost your raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood in the refrigerator, in a microwave or immersed in cold water.
- Food that has been defrosted in the microwave should be cooked as soon as possible after thawing.
- Don't refreeze thawed food.
- If you are defrosting a large piece of meat, such as a turkey that may not fit easily in the refrigerator, immerse it in cold water while keeping it in its original wrapping. Change the water often (for example, every 30 minutes) to make sure that the water continues to be cold.
- Immediately sanitize sinks, kitchen surfaces or containers that come in contact with raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood.

Storing

- Keep your raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood cold. Refrigerate or freeze them as soon as you get home from the grocery store. Make sure your refrigerator is set at **4°C** (40°F) or lower and your freezer at **-18°C** (0°F) or lower. This will keep your food out of the temperature danger zone, between **4°C** (40°F) to **60°C** (140°F), where bacteria can grow quickly.





- Store deli meats in the refrigerator. Use pre-packaged deli meats within 4 days, preferably 2-3 days, after opening; even if this date is different than the best-before date. Best-before dates apply to unopened packages only. Deli-meats sliced at the grocer should also be eaten within 4 days, preferably 2-3 days.
- Store cut fruit and vegetables in the refrigerator.
- You can cool leftovers quickly by placing them in shallow containers. Refrigerate as soon as possible or within two hours.
- Never leave raw meat, poultry, fish, seafood or leftovers out on the counter for longer than two hours. After two hours at room temperature, levels of bacteria in your food can become dangerous. You can't tell if food is unsafe by its smell or taste. When in doubt, throw it out!



Chill

Cook

Food to avoid

Temperatures

Cook

Proper cooking is the best way to make sure your food is safe to eat. Bacteria such as *E. coli*, *Salmonella* and *Listeria* are killed by heat.

Safe internal temperature



- Always remember to cook raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood to a safe internal temperature to avoid food-borne illness. You should use a digital food thermometer to check (see chart at the end of this booklet).

Colour alone is not a reliable indicator that meat is safe to eat. Meat can turn brown before all the bacteria are killed.

- Remove the food from the heat and insert the digital food thermometer through the thickest part of the meat, all the way to the middle. Make sure the thermometer is not touching any bones. For hamburgers, insert the digital food thermometer through the side of the patty, all the way to the middle.
- If you are cooking a number of pieces of meat, poultry, fish or seafood, make sure to insert the thermometer into several of the thickest pieces to verify that the appropriate temperature has been reached since food can cook unevenly.





Cross-contamination

- Don't use the same plates or utensils for raw and cooked meat, poultry, fish or seafood because cross-contamination can occur. Raw juices can spread bacteria to your safely cooked food and this can cause foodborne illness.
 - Clean your digital food thermometer in warm, soapy water between temperature readings to avoid cross-contamination.











Tips:

- Do not let children touch raw meat, poultry, or fish.
- Do not serve raw alfalfa or bean sprouts to young children. Raw sprouts have been linked to outbreaks of salmonella and E. coli infection. Cooked sprouts are safe to eat.
- Never give your child foods containing raw eggs (cookie dough, cake batter) and serve only pasteurized milk and juice to your child.

Select the Safer Alternative

(Always refer to the Internal Cooking Temperatures Chart on the next page.)

Type of Food	Food to Avoid
 Dairy products	Raw or unpasteurized milk.
 Honey	Honey to infants who are less than a year of age, either added to baby food or used on a soother.
 Hot Dogs	Hot dogs straight from the package without further heating.
 Eggs and egg products	Raw or lightly cooked eggs or egg products, including salad dressings, cookie dough or cake batter, sauces and drinks such as homemade eggnog.
 Seafood	Raw oysters, clams and mussels. Raw seafood such as sushi. Refrigerated smoked seafood.
 Meat and poultry	Raw or undercooked meat or poultry such as steak tartare.
 Fruit juice and cider	Unpasteurized fruit juice and cider.
 Sprouts	Raw sprouts such as alfalfa, clover, radish and mung beans.

Some foods, such as those listed below, can be a higher risk for young children to eat because of the way they are produced, and the conditions and length of time they are stored. You can minimize the chances of your child contracting a foodborne illness by avoiding some types of food or by choosing a safer alternative.

Safer Alternatives

Pasteurized milk.

Wait until your child is older than one year. If you are looking for a way to quiet a fussy or colicky baby, ask your doctor for some alternative methods.

Hot dogs thoroughly cooked to a safe internal temperature. The middle of the hot dog should be steaming hot or **74°C** (165°F).

Egg dishes thoroughly cooked to a safe internal temperature. Eggs should be cooked until the yolk is firm. Homemade egnog must be heated to **71°C** (160°F).

Cook until the shell has opened.

Seafood cooked to a safe internal temperature of **74°C** (165°F).

Smoked seafood in cans that do not require refrigeration until after opening.

Meat and poultry cooked to a safe internal temperature. (Refer to the Internal Cooking Temperatures Chart.)

Unpasteurized fruit juice and cider brought to a rolling boil and cooled. Pasteurized fruit juice and cider.

Thoroughly cooked sprouts.

You can't tell by looking.
Use a digital food thermometer
to be sure!



**Beef, veal
and lamb**
(pieces and
whole cuts)



**Ground meat and
meat mixtures**
(for example, burgers,
sausages, meatballs,
meatloaf, casseroles)



Poultry
(for example, chicken,
turkey, duck)



Pork
(pieces and
whole cuts)



Egg dishes



Others
(for example, hot dogs,
stuffing, leftovers, seafood)

Internal Cooking Temperatures

63°C (145°F) Medium rare

71°C (160°F) Medium

77°C (170°F) Well done

71°C (160°F) Beef, veal, lamb and pork

74°C (165°F) Poultry

74°C (165°F) Pieces

85°C (185°F) Whole

71°C (160°F)

74°C (165°F)

74°C (165°F)

What the Government of Canada does to keep our food supply safe

The Government of Canada is committed to food safety.

Health Canada establishes regulations and standards relating to the safety and nutritional quality of foods sold in Canada. Through inspection and enforcement activities, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency verifies that food sold in Canada meets Health Canada's requirements.

For more information on food safety, please visit the following websites:

Healthy Canadians:

HealthyCanadians.gc.ca/foodsafety

Health Canada:

www.healthcanada.gc.ca

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency:

www.inspection.gc.ca

The Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education's Be Food Safe Canada program:

www.befoodsafe.ca

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