Create Safe Food

# Clean

Wash hands, utensils, and cutting boards before and after contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.

Clean hands: Washing your hands is an important step when preparing and before eating a meal. Always wash your hands before preparing food and after handling raw meat, poultry, eggs and seafood.

Follow these steps to thoroughly wash your hands.

1. Wet your hands with warm, running water. Apply soap.
2. Lather hands by rubbing them together to make bubbles with the soap.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Make sure to scrub on the top and bottoms of hands. Scrub under fingernails and between fingers. Try to sing a song like “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” to track the time. If you find that you sing fast, sing it twice.
4. Rinse your hands with warm, running water. Turn faucet off with a clean paper towel. (Remember, it was turned on with dirty hands).
5. Dry your hands with a clean paper towel. Use a paper towel to open the bathroom door. Throw away the paper towel.

Clean Fruits and Vegetables: Wash all fruits and vegetables in water before peeling, eating, or cooking. Do not use soap. Vegetable brushes are helpful. Don’t wash meat or poultry before cooking.

Clean Surfaces: Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot, soapy water before and after preparing food. Wash anything that touches meat, poultry and seafood. This includes things like knives, hands, plates, or cutting boards. Choose plastic or smooth cutting boards. Consider using paper towels for kitchen cleanup. If using cloth towels, wash and switch them out often. Avoid using the same cloth or paper towel for cleaning up foods that should be kept separate.

# Separate

Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs away from foods that won’t be cooked. This includes in your grocery cart, in your refrigerator and your food prep.

In grocery carts and bags: keep meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood separate from other items in the cart. Use separate plastic bags in the cart for these items, if possible. Make sure to have these items bagged separately from other foods.

In the refrigerator: Keep meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood separate from other foods in the refrigerator. Make sure that these items are stored in sealed bags or containers. It is best to keep them on the bottom shelf to avoid dripping on other food.

During food preparation: Use one cutting board for cutting raw meat, poultry, and seafood and another board for cutting other foods. If only one board is available, make sure to wash thoroughly with soap and water between uses. Especially after using it to cut raw meat, poultry, and seafood.

# Cook

Use a thermometer to determine if your food is properly cooked. You can’t tell food is safely cooked by how it looks or feels.

Proper cooking kills many types of bacteria that can make people sick. Do not rely on the color or texture of food to decide if it is done. The best way to know if anything has been cooked to a safe temperature is by checking with a food thermometer. Make sure to check the temperature at the thickest part of the food. Use this chart at [Safe Food Handling](https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/safe-temperature-chart) to check if food is done.

# Chill

Refrigerate leftovers and perishable foods within 2 hours.

Keep your refrigerator between 38 degrees Fahrenheit and 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Make sure your freezer is at 0 degrees Fahrenheit.

Make sure to refrigerate or freeze perishables and leftovers within 2 hours. Marinate food in the refrigerator.

Always thaw food in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave. Do not thaw food on the counter.

Divide large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator. Do not overfill the refrigerator or freezer.

# Safe minimum internal temperatures

* For beef, pork, veal and lamb roast, steaks, chops, fresh, or smoked ham, the internal temperature should be at least 145 degrees Fahrenheit.
* Fully cooked ham that needs to be reheated should be reheated to 165 degrees Fahrenheit.
* Ground meat should be heated to at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit.
* All poultry, whole parts or ground, should be heated to 165 degrees Fahrenheit.
* Eggs and egg dishes should be heated to 160 degrees Fahrenheit.
* Leftovers and casseroles should be heated to 165 degrees Fahrenheit.
* Fish and shellfish should be heated to 145 degrees Fahrenheit.

Additional Resources:

FightBAC.org

Supported by FIGHT BAC! a food safety education partnership, at FightBAC.org, you can find more information about the core four practices: clean, separate, cook, and chill.

References:

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