



# Food Safety Toolkit

**How to Prevent Illnesses in  
Your School's Community  
Kitchen**



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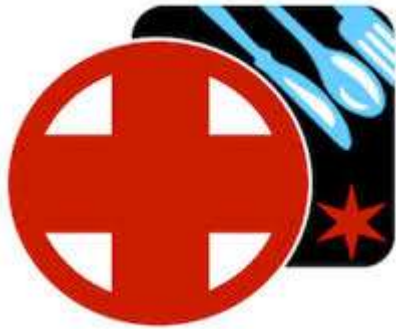
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Cooking in your school's community kitchen is a great way to feed kids and families. You can meet and build relationships with parents, staff, and students. This toolkit can help you use the kitchen in a safe way, so no one gets food poisoning!

A wooden cutting board with a large green leafy vegetable, a knife, and four slices of pink meat.

# **Foodborne Illness**

**And How to Prevent It**

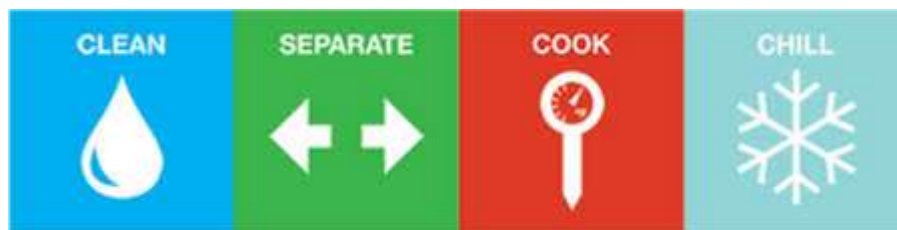


## Foodborne Illness is a Serious Problem

Every year, millions of Americans suffer from a foodborne illness. Some of the symptoms include nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. In severe cases, foodborne illness can result in hospitalization or even death. Children and the elderly are at higher risk of foodborne illness, so it is especially important to practice food safety in schools and at school events.

Foodborne illness is most often caused by viruses, parasites, or disease-causing bacteria called pathogens. These pathogens and other organisms are invisible to the naked eye, but there are things you can do to prevent them from making your kids sick. By making sure your kitchen is clean and sanitary, and by cooking and storing foods at the correct temperatures, you can help prevent illness.

**To Prevent Illness, Follow the 4 Steps of Food Safety:**





# **Four Steps to Food Safety**

**Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill**



## STEP 1: CLEAN

## FOOD SAFETY QUICK TIPS



### Lather up

Before eating, wash your hands with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds. Count to 20 slowly or sing the "Happy Birthday" song to yourself twice.



### Eat clean

Rinse fruits and veggies under running water. Slicing or dicing? Scrub 'em anyway—germs can jump from rinds to the insides during cutting and peeling.



### Rules for tools

Wash cutting boards, knives, and other cooking utensils in hot, soapy water or the dishwasher after each use.



### Create a safe cooking space

Wash countertops, cooking surfaces, and insides of the refrigerator, freezer, and microwave frequently with hot, soapy water.



### Clean it before you crack it open

Wash food packaging, especially lids of cans and jars, before opening.

Find more Quick Tips on the 4 Steps to Food Safety: Clean, Separate, Cook, CHILL at [www.fda.gov/food](http://www.fda.gov/food)

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# Clean

Keeping pathogens away from food is easier if you clean!

- Clean your hands by washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Clean your tools. Wash cutting boards, knives, mixing bowls, and other utensils after every use.
- Clean your cooking surfaces.



## STEP 2: SEPARATE

## FOOD SAFETY QUICK TIPS



### No touching

Raw meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, and flour should never come into contact with produce or any food that is ready-to-eat—keep them separate while shopping, storing, and cooking.



### Put a lid on it

Place raw meats in sealed containers or plastic wrap on lower shelves of the fridge or freezer.



### No yolking around

Storing eggs on the fridge door can expose them to uneven temperatures. Keep them on lower shelves instead, in their original carton.



### Double up

If you can, use a separate set of cooking tools for raw meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, and flour. If you can't, wash them thoroughly in hot, soapy water between cooking with produce and cooking with meats, eggs, or flour.



### Serve it safely

When grilling, barbecuing, or cooking meat, use different plates for raw and cooked meat.

Find more **Quick Tips on the 4 Steps to Food Safety: Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill** at [www.fda.gov/food](http://www.fda.gov/food)

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# Separate

**Separate foods and cooking utensils to prevent CROSS-CONTAMINATION.**

“Cross-contamination” is when pathogens from one food get onto another. This can happen when you use a knife or table to work with raw chicken, and then later use the same knife or table to chop vegetables for a salad. If you do not wash the knife and table after they touch the chicken, they can contaminate the vegetables with pathogens from the chicken.



### STEP 3: COOK

## FOOD SAFETY QUICK TIPS



#### Heat it before you eat it

Use a food thermometer to check that your food has reached a safe temperature.  
**145 °F** for seafood  
**145 °F** with a 3-minute rest time for beef, pork, and ham  
**160 °F** for ground meat, meat mixtures, and egg dishes  
**165 °F** for poultry, microwaved foods, and reheated leftovers



#### Doughs are don'ts

Eggs and flour are not safe to eat unless fully cooked.



#### Turn the tables

When microwaving, make sure to rotate food to allow for even heating. Always follow directions for cooking and standing time.



#### Dish it out

When eating at restaurants, avoid foods that contain raw or undercooked egg, meat, poultry, or seafood. Ask the server if you aren't sure.

Find more **Quick Tips** on the **4 Steps to Food Safety: Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill** at [www.fda.gov/food](http://www.fda.gov/food)

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# Cook

Pathogens that make us sick like certain conditions for living and growing. Most need just a tiny bit moisture, some food and oxygen, and comfortable temperatures. Cooking foods to a high enough temperature will kill most pathogens, and make food safe to eat.

While cooking, take food's temperature by inserting an instant-read thermometer into the thickest part of the food.





# Different types of food need to be cooked to different temperatures to make them safe to eat. This chart will tell you the right temperatures to cook foods to:



## Safe Minimum Cooking Temperatures Charts

Food	Type	Internal Temperature (*F)
Ground meat and meat mixtures	Beef, pork, veal, lamb	160
	Turkey, chicken	165
Fresh beef, veal, lamb	Steaks, roasts, chops Rest time: 3 minutes	145
Poultry	All Poultry (breasts, whole bird, legs, thighs, wings, ground poultry, giblets, and stuffing)	165
Pork and ham	Fresh pork, including fresh ham Rest time: 3 minutes	145
	Precooked ham (to reheat) Note: Reheat cooked hams packaged in USDA-inspected plants to 140°F	165
Eggs and egg dishes	Eggs	Cook until yolk and white are firm
	Egg dishes (such as frittata, quiche)	160
Leftovers and casseroles	Leftovers and casseroles	165
Seafood	Fish with fins	145 or cook until flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork
	Shrimp, lobster, crab, and scallops	Cook until flesh is pearly or white, and opaque
	Clams, oysters, mussels	Cook until shells open during cooking



## STEP 4: CHILL

## FOOD SAFETY QUICK TIPS



### Check the App

USDA FoodKeeper can tell you how long foods and drinks are safe to keep in the refrigerator or freezer.



### Shop, and don't stop

At the grocery store, pick up perishable foods last and take them straight home.



### Keep your cool

Chill groceries, leftovers, and food delivery items within 2 hours, or 1 hour if exposed to temperatures above 90 °F. Use an appliance thermometer to set fridge to 40 °F or below and freezer at 0 °F or below.



### Let it breathe

Leave space for air to circulate between containers in your fridge and freezer.



### Stay chill

If bringing cold foods on-the-go, pack them with ice in an insulated container.

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# Chill

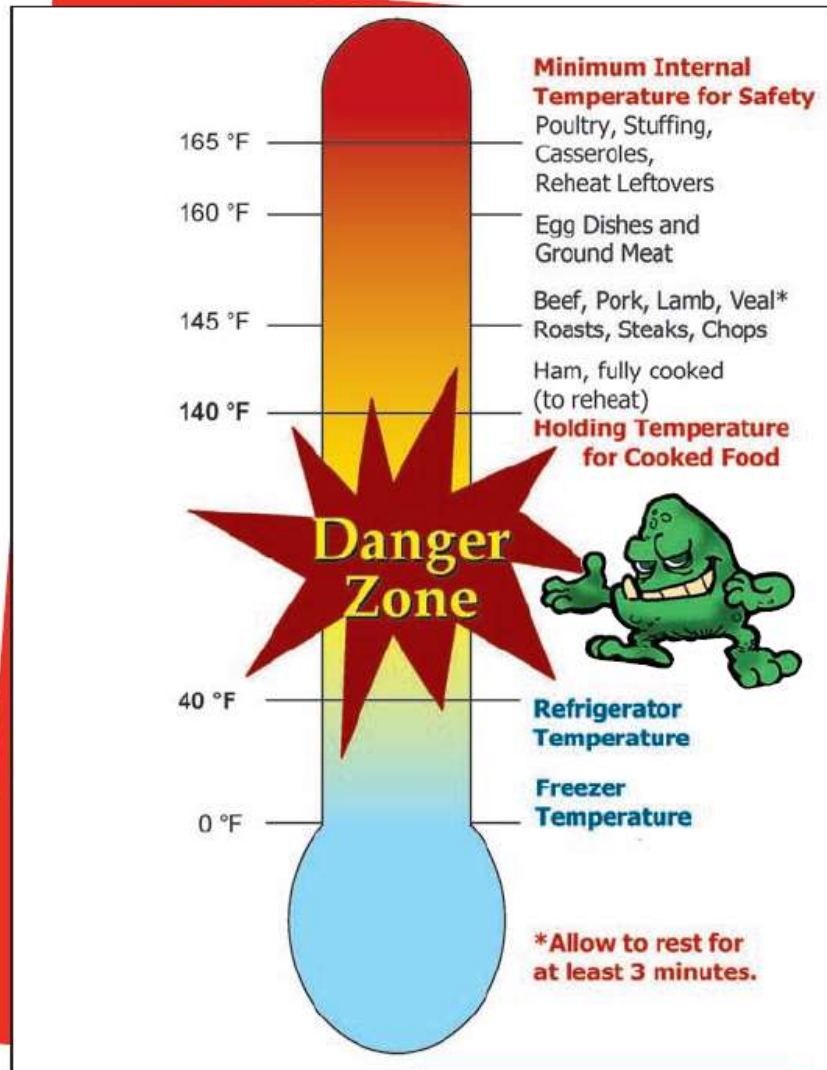
Heat will kill pathogens.

Cold temperatures won't kill pathogens, but they will slow or stop their growth. If you cool food quickly, and store it below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, you can prevent the spread of pathogens.

# Keep Foods at Safe Temperatures

When serving a large group, it is important to KEEP HOT FOODS HOT and COLD FOODS COLD.

When foods aren't kept hot or cold, they fall into the TEMPERATURE DANGER ZONE. In this Danger Zone, pathogens grow and multiply. Foods might fall into the danger zone while you are serving them, when you are thawing them, or when you are cooling them down to store for later.



If a food is in the DANGER ZONE for 2 hours, it is unsafe. Play it safe: throw the food out!



# Potentially Hazardous Foods

**Some foods are more dangerous than others, because they are more likely to be contaminated with pathogens. Other foods are more dangerous because they provide pathogens with perfect conditions for spreading and growing. These more dangerous foods are called “Potentially Hazardous Foods”.**

**Potentially Hazardous Foods are:**

- 1. Foods that come from animals, like raw chicken, ground beef, eggs, or milk.**
- 2. Foods that are from plants but have been heated, such as cooked rice, or cooked potatoes.**
- 3. Raw sprouts.**
- 4. Cut melons, like cantaloupe, honeydew, or watermelon.**
- 5. Garlic and oil mixtures, such as salad dressings**

# Some schools wish to set up Sharing Tables during lunch or breakfast. This is guidance from New York State's Department of Education:

Although Part 14 of the State Sanitary Code prohibits the re-service of food that has already been exposed to the consumer or other forms of contamination, foods that are protected from contamination and immediately donated following the guidance below are not considered previously served.

To ensure the safety of food and drink items placed on sharing tables, the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Education Department developed the following guidance pertaining to sharing tables. School food service operators should consult with their local health departments to discuss any additional requirements.

Sharing tables can safely be implemented provided the following conditions are met:

- Food items are protected from contamination (wrapped in plastic wrap or in covered containers); fruits requiring peeling (e.g. oranges) are considered protected
- The sharing table is supervised by a school food service staff person
- Students must leave unwanted food items on the sharing table before sitting down to eat
- The use of a sharing table is included in the school's standard operating procedures and food safety plan
- Time/temperature controlled for safety (TCS) foods placed on the sharing table must be held under temperature control or (with a Time as a Public Health Control (TPHC) waiver from the local health department) discarded at the end of the lunch service (not more than four hours)
- Donated food may not be returned to the kitchen and sold again



HEALTHIKIDS.ORG   

585.224.3101 | [info@healthikids.org](mailto:info@healthikids.org) | 1150 University Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607