

4 STEP FOOD PREP

A guide to
handling
food safely



There are 4 essential steps to food safety. Eating food that has not been handled or cooked properly can make you sick.

1

CLEAN HANDS AND SURFACES

2

SEPARATE RAW FROM COOKED

3

COOK THOROUGHLY

4

CHILL KEEP IT COLD

Most food poisoning (foodborne illness) happens in the home. Practise safe food handling and stay healthy!

1

CLEAN HANDS AND SURFACES

Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto hands, cutting boards, knives, dish cloths, sponges and counter tops. Clean frequently and thoroughly.

Here's how...

- Always wash your hands with soap before preparing or serving food and after:

- handling raw meat, poultry and seafood
- using the washroom or changing diapers
- sneezing/coughing
- handling garbage
- touching pets

Hand washing steps

1. Wet hands.
2. Apply soap.
3. Rub hands together for 15 seconds.
4. Scrub in between fingers, the back of hands and fingers tips.
5. Rinse and towel dry.

- Wash cutting boards, knives, utensils and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before going to the next one.
- Add an extra cleaning step with surfaces. Wipe them using: 1/2 teaspoon of household bleach in one litre of water.
- Dish cloths can be an ideal environment for bacteria to grow and multiply. Change dish cloths often and machine wash them in hot water. Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces.

2

SEPARATE RAW FROM COOKED

Bacteria can easily spread from raw foods to cooked foods. This is called cross-contamination. When preparing raw meat, poultry and seafood make sure you keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods.

Here's how...

- Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other food in your grocery cart and bags. Use the clear plastic bags provided at the meat counter.
- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator on a plate so juices don't drip onto other foods.
- Use one cutting board for raw meat, poultry or seafood and another for foods that are ready-to-eat, such as salads, fruit, etc.
- Always wash cutting boards, knives and other utensils with hot soapy water after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- Never place cooked food on a plate that held uncooked meat, poultry or seafood.



3 COOK THOROUGHLY



Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness.

Here's how...

- Use a meat thermometer to measure the internal temperature of cooked meat and poultry to make sure that the meat is cooked all the way through. See cooking temperature chart.
- If you don't use a meat thermometer, cook until juices run clear (no blood).
- Cook ground meat, such as hamburger, thoroughly. Bacteria can spread during the grinding process and may cause serious illness unless destroyed by cooking. Do not eat ground beef that is pink inside. If it's grey, it's safe.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm, not runny. Don't use recipes that call for raw or only partially cooked eggs.
- Cook fish until it flakes easily with a fork.
- When cooking in a microwave, make sure there are no cold spots where bacteria can survive in the food. Cover food, stir and rotate for even cooking. If there is no turntable, rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking.
- When re-heating always bring sauces, soups and gravy to a boil. Heat leftovers thoroughly.

Safe Temperatures for Cooked Foods	
Ground beef/pork	71°C (160°F)
Chicken/turkey pieces	74°C (165°F)
Ground chicken/turkey	74°C (165°F)
Whole chicken/turkey	82°C (180°F)
Stuffing	74°C (165°F)
Fish	70°C (158°F)

- Sauce used to marinate raw meat, poultry or seafood should not be used on cooked foods. If the sauce is to be used on cooked food, it must be brought to a boil.

4 CHILL KEEP IT COLD

Cold temperatures of 4°C/40°F or below slow down the growth of micro-organisms. Use a refrigerator thermometer to check that your refrigerator temperature is 4°C/40°F or below and your freezer temperature is -18°C/0°F. Refrigerator thermometers are available in hardware stores. Keeping food cold is one of the best ways to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Here's how...

- Do not over-stuff the refrigerator. Cold air must be able to circulate to keep food safe.
- Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator. For a quick thaw, place the food item in an airtight package and put in cold water. Another option is to thaw in the microwave if cooking immediately.
- Always marinate foods in the refrigerator.
- Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods and leftovers within two hours of purchase or use.
- Separate large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.



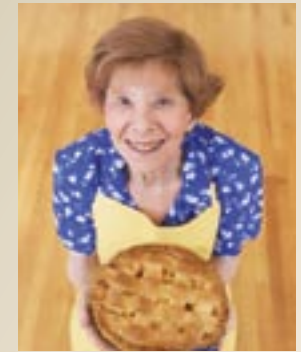
DineSafe at Toronto Restaurants

Food Premises Inspection and Disclosure Program

Food safety is a concern at home and in restaurants. Toronto Public Health staff work with restaurants to make sure that eating out is a safe and healthy experience.

For public health inspection reports about any Toronto restaurant, go to:

toronto.ca/health/dinesafe



If you have any questions or concerns about:

- safe food handling, storage and cooking
- a grocery store
- a restaurant

Call Toronto Health Connection

416-338-7600

Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

toronto.ca/health