

IT'S SAFE FOOD --- KEEP IT SAFE

Harmful microorganisms, or the toxins they produce, can cause us to become ill. Ways to prevent foodborne illness include:

- Wash hands to prevent the spread of dangerous bacteria, viruses, and other microorganisms on food.
- Clean and sanitize work areas, surfaces, and equipment after each use to prevent contamination from harmful bacteria.
- Use different containers for each food item and keep foods separated (especially raw and cooked items) to prevent the transfer of harmful bacteria from one food to another.
- Keep foods out of the DANGER ZONE (40°F to 140°F). Harmful bacteria grow very rapidly between these temperatures.
- Thaw foods in a refrigerator or submerged in cold water to prevent the product temperature from reaching the danger zone.
- Heat all potentially hazardous foods to 145°F or above. Exceptions:
 - ◆ poultry, any stuffed meats, and stuffing should reach at least 165°F.
 - ◆ ground beef patties should be cooked to 160°F.
- Cool foods rapidly in the refrigerator or surrounded by cold water.
 - ◆ Use small, flat containers.
 - ◆ Cut bulky foods into smaller pieces before refrigerating.
- To cool foods, either
 - ◆ cool them so that the final temperature (41°F or less) is reached within 4 hours or
 - ◆ cool them from 140°F to 70°F within 2 hours, then from 70°F to 41°F or below within 4 hours.
- Reheat foods rapidly to 165°F.

Prepared by: Sue Snider, Ph.D.
Food and Nutrition Specialist

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