

Food Safety – Prepare with Care

The following steps will help keep food safe from harmful bacteria or germs that could make you or your family sick.

Keep Everything Clean

- **Wash hands** under warm, running soapy water before preparing or eating food and after anything that interrupts either of those activities.
- **Wash fruits and vegetables** carefully under cold running water before cooking or eating them raw.
- **Wash dishes, cutting boards, utensils, and counter tops** thoroughly with hot soapy water or kitchen sprays containing ammonia. Use clean dishcloths. Don't use sponges - they often spread germs.
- **When using a cutting board**, wash it thoroughly with hot soapy water between uses for different foods, especially after using it to cut raw meat. If possible, use a separate cutting board for meats and only meats, preferably an easy to identify color. Use cutting boards made of plastic or hardwood, such as maple.

Prepare Foods Properly

- **Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator** or under cold running water, or in the microwave – never on the counter or in a bowl of standing water.
- **Cook foods thoroughly and use a clean meat thermometer**, if available. Insert the meat thermometer in the thickest part of the meat and poultry. Cook roasts, steaks, and seafood to at least 145°F, ground beef to at least 160°F and whole poultry to 180°F. Cook eggs until firm.



Store and Reheat Food Safely

- **Store raw foods on the bottom shelf** of the refrigerator so the juices don't drip onto other foods.
- **Set the refrigerator at no higher than 40°F and make certain the freezer unit is set at 0°F.** Check temperatures with refrigerator and freezer thermometers.
- **Store dry ingredients** (e.g., rice, sugar) **in dry containers with tight-fitting lids** to keep out insects and rodents.
- **Divide or separate large batches of food into smaller batches of food.** Cover and refrigerate or freeze these smaller batches of food right away. Never leave food on the counter to cool.
- **Leftovers** that are refrigerated or frozen should be reheated and reused only one time. If they are not all eaten the second time, throw them out.
- **When reheating food**, bring liquids such as gravy, soup, or sauce to a boil. Heat other leftovers to at least 165°F.



For more information about safe food handling and preparation check out the Partnership for Food Safety Education Web Site located at www.fightbac.org or call 1-888-SAFEFOOD.

For food safety, I agree to:
