

Food Safety

Keeping food safe from contamination is an extremely important part of food handling and preparation. Good practices keep everyone healthy, especially people living with serious illness.

What is food borne illness?



Food-borne or food-related illness is disease caused by microorganisms (e.g., bacteria) that are carried to people through food. Microorganisms are tiny and cannot be seen by the naked eye, so it is difficult to tell if something has been contaminated. Typical symptoms of food-related illness include nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps and diarrhea.

How prevalent is it?



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that there are 76 million cases of food-related illness in the US each year. Most cases are mild. However, it is estimated that annually, 5,000 deaths can be related to food-borne illness. While everyone is at risk, certain groups are at higher risk: the very young, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems.

What about personal hygiene?



Wash your hands! Done correctly, hand washing may cut food-borne illness in half! To be effective, wash with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds (the length of time it takes to sing two choruses of happy birthday). Wash the front and back of hands, under nails and up to your wrist. Rinse well and dry on a paper towel or clean cloth. Wash your hands before preparing food, before eating, after handling raw meat, using the bathroom, blowing your nose or touching your face.

How do I store food?



Storing foods promptly after cooking inhibits bacterial growth. Don't leave food out on the stovetop for more than 2 hours. Storing food at proper temperatures also slows bacterial growth. Keep the refrigerator between 32°F and 40°F and the freezer at 0°F. Place a thermometer in each appliance to monitor these temperatures.

What are best practices for food preparation?



Wash all surfaces (cutting boards, etc) and utensils before and after they come in contact with food. Avoid cross-contamination by immediately washing anything that touches raw meats, poultry, fish and eggs. Remember to always wash your hands before moving on to the next task. Cooking food thoroughly also can prevent food-related illness. See cooking temperature guide below for more details.

To what temperatures should I cook my food?



Steaks and roasts should cook to an internal temperature of 145°F. Ground meats should cook to an internal temperature of 160°F. Whole chicken and turkey should be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F. Eggs should be cooked until the yolks are firm – 145°F. Cook fish until it begins to flake – 145°F. Reheat leftovers to 165°F.

How do I safely handle frozen meals?



The safest way to defrost a frozen meal is overnight on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator. If you are going to continue to cook and eat the meal right away, it is also OK to defrost in the microwave. Frozen meals can also be defrosted directly in the oven. To do this, pierce film to vent and heat at 350°F for 30 minutes. It is NOT recommended to defrost frozen foods on the countertop at room temperature where bacteria multiply easily. Once defrosted, meals can be heated in an oven at 350°F for 10-12 minutes or in a microwave on high for 2-3 minutes. Our frozen meals are good for up to three months in the freezer. Watch our food safety videos [in English](#), [in Chinese](#), and [in Spanish](#).

How do I safely handle frozen soups?



We recommend thawing our frozen soups overnight on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator. Soups should NOT be left out on the countertop to defrost because bacteria can grow rapidly at room temperature. Soups can also be thawed and heated on the stovetop or in the microwave. To thaw and heat on the stovetop, place soup in a small saucepan on low heat, stirring occasionally until bubbling and hot throughout. If using a microwave, place soup in a microwavable bowl and select the defrost setting. Once defrosted, continue to heat on high for 2-3 minutes, stir and test if hot throughout. Our frozen soups are good for up to three months in the freezer.

How do I safely handle desserts?



All of our baked desserts are made on premise without preservatives and can be stored in the refrigerator for up to four days. Any items containing dairy (like puddings) or fruit, should be refrigerated immediately and consumed within two days.

Videos



Food Safety Instructions

Published on Nov 30, 2016

In this video, you will find information on how to properly re-heat the meals that are delivered to you from God's Love We Deliver.





Food Safety Instructions in Chinese

Published on Mar 28, 2018

In this video, you will find information on how to properly re-heat the meals that are delivered to you from God's Love We Deliver.



Instrucciones de como mantener la comida segura //Food Safety Instructions

Published on Jul 25, 2018

En este video, encontrará información sobre como descongelar y recalentar las comidas que God's Love We Deliver le entrega.

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- **Food Safety Instructions**



- **Food Safety Instructions in Chinese**



- **Instrucciones de como mantener la comida segura //Food Safety...**