

# Food Hygiene

Good food hygiene practices reduce the risk of food contamination with bacteria, viruses, parasites, and other toxins.

If your immune function has been suppressed, you may need to take extra precautions to minimise the risk of food-borne illness. By following these safe food practices, patients and caregivers can reduce the risk of food-borne illness.

## KEY MESSAGES

- Avoid high risk foods
- Handle foods safely
- Store foods safely
- Cook and cool foods safely
- Take care when eating out

## HIGH RISK FOODS

- Raw & undercooked seafood, meats, and poultry
- Cold deli meats & chicken – packaged or unpackaged – unless reheated to steaming hot
- Foods containing raw or partially cooked eggs
- Cold smoked seafood & ready-to-eat peeled prawns
- Raw sprouts & commercial ‘ready-to-eat’ deli salads
- Pate, liverwurst & meat spreads
- Soft, semi-soft and surface ripened cheeses, such as blue, brie, camembert, ricotta and feta
- Soft-serve ice-creams and drinks made with soft serve ice-creams

- Unpasteurised dairy products such as raw goats milk, cheeses and yoghurts made from raw milk

## SAFE FOOD HANDLING

- Always wash hands well with soap and water and dry thoroughly before eating and before and after handling foods. Be especially careful between handling raw meats and vegetables
- Wash knives, cutting boards, utensils, kitchen appliances and food preparation surfaces with hot water and soap. Dry thoroughly, especially after contact with raw poultry, meat, and seafood
- Thoroughly rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water just before eating – rub gently using a vegetable brush or clean cloth where appropriate
- For leafy vegetables remove outside leaves, and rinse leaves individually
- Dry washed fruits and vegetables using a clean disposable or cloth towel
- Do not wash or rinse meats or poultry
- Do not taste foods with the same utensil used for stirring
- Do not eat foods from damaged or faulty containers
- Avoid preparing foods for others when unwell
- Do not taste any fresh or leftover food if there is any doubt about its safety

*“If in doubt, throw it out!”*

## FOOD STORAGE

- Separate raw, cooked and ready-to-eat foods while purchasing, storing and preparing foods
- Store raw meats below other foods in the refrigerator to prevent dripping onto other foods
- Refrigerate or freeze perishable foods as soon as possible
- Do not leave perishable or cooked foods in vehicles, on stovetops or benches
- Keep stored foods covered
- Do not wait for cooked foods to cool - refrigerate/freeze after the steam has gone
- Defrost foods in the refrigerator or microwave – not at room temperature.
- Do not refreeze uncooked foods already defrosted
- Keep the refrigerator clean
- Leftover foods should be consumed within 48 hours unless frozen
- Do not consume products beyond their “use-by date”
- Store eggs in the refrigerator

## TEMPERATURE RULES FOR SAFE COOKING AND HANDLING OF FOODS

- Maintain refrigerator temperature between 2<sup>0</sup>C and 5<sup>0</sup>C. Maintain freezer temperature below -15<sup>0</sup>C
- Eat cold foods cold (< 5<sup>0</sup>C) and hot foods hot (> 60<sup>0</sup>C). Do not leave food sitting before eating
- Cook foods to a safe temperature – at least 70<sup>0</sup>C for 2 minutes

- Cook meats and chicken until juices run clear
- Thoroughly reheat food until steaming hot throughout (70<sup>0</sup>C) and keep at this temperature for at least 2 minutes prior to serving
- Microwave cooking can result in uneven cooking temperatures. Rotate dishes during cooking and follow instructions on standing times

## EATING OUT

- Avoid high risk foods
- Ask for food to be freshly prepared in fast-food restaurants
- Do not purchase foods when foods or ingredients have been sitting for an unknown time period
- Avoid public self serve condiment containers – eg sauce/mustard bottles
- Go somewhere else if you have any concerns about food handling or food storage practices

For further information contact the Dietitian, or refer to the following websites and references:

Food Standards Australia website  
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/>

Australian Food Safety Information Council  
<http://www.foodsafety.asn.au>

Chapter 10: Food Safety  
Dietary Guidelines for Americans  
<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>

US Food Safety gateway website  
<http://www.foodsafety.gov/>