Food poisoning can result from eating contaminated food. Most food poisoning results from improper handling of food. You can help protect yourself by following basic food safety guidelines.

**Avoid contamination of food**

**Food handling**

- Always wash your hands with soap and dry well before handling and/or eating food.
- Wash utensils and work surfaces before and after use.
- Use separate chopping boards and utensils for raw and cooked foods and once finished clean thoroughly with hot, soapy water.
- Wash fruits and vegetables well.
- Keep pets/pests out of the kitchen and away from all food and preparation areas.

**Food storage**

- Keep raw and cooked foods separate.
- Store raw foods at the bottom of the fridge on a plate or in a container to avoid dripping.
- If you cannot remember how long something has been in the fridge, throw it out. See following guides for recommended fridge storage temperatures and times [https://www.csiro.au/en/Research/Health/Healthier-safer-foods/Food-safety](https://www.csiro.au/en/Research/Health/Healthier-safer-foods/Food-safety)
- Never eat food past the ‘use by’ date. Foods with a ‘best before date’ should be eaten before this date.
- Don’t eat foods from damaged or dented cans as it may be contaminated.
Temperature control

- Keep hot food hot (above 60°C) and cold food cold (at or below 5°C).
- Ensure cooked food is hot throughout.
- Reheat food thoroughly until piping hot and never reheat more than once.
- Follow cooking methods and reheating instructions on packaged foods.
- Microwave cooking can result in uneven heating of food, so it is important to follow instructions on standing time to allow the temperature of food to even out.
- Foods not going to be eaten straight away should be covered and put in the fridge.
- Never leave uncooked or cooked food at room temperature for any longer than necessary.
- Defrost foods in the fridge or microwave. Do not defrost foods on the kitchen bench.
- Do not refreeze food that has already been defrosted.
- Use an esky or cooler bag and ice packs if you need to travel more than half an hour or if the weather is warm.
- Keep your refrigerator clean and ensure the temperature is maintained below 5°C.
- Refrigerate leftover foods immediately (don’t leave out on the bench to cool)