

# Proper Food Handling and Storage

Handling and preparing food properly goes a long way toward preventing food-borne illnesses.

## The most common causes of food-borne illness outbreaks are:

- Cooked food coming in contact with raw food
- Adding raw, contaminated ingredients to foods that receive no further cooking
- Using equipment that is not clean or sanitary
- Preparing food too far in advance of it being served
- Allowing foods to sit too long at temperatures favorable to bacterial growth
- Failure to thoroughly heat or cook food, properly cool foods or reheat cooked foods to temperatures that kill bacteria
- Employees who practice poor personal hygiene
- Label chemicals and store away from food or food contact surfaces. Read and sign all Material Safety Data Sheets before using any chemical.
- Make sure the following internal temperatures are reached for at least 15 seconds when cooking:
  - Fish (145 degrees)
  - Chicken (180 degrees)
  - Ground beef/pork (160 degrees)
  - Non-ground beef/pork (145 degrees)
- Keep hot food at 140 degrees or higher, cold foods at 40 degrees or cooler and freeze at 0 degrees. Measure food temperatures at least every four hours.
- Reheat all previously cooked food to an internal temperature of 165 degrees for at least 15 seconds.
- Meltdown and sanitize ice machines frequently.
- Wash hands after smoking, eating, coughing/sneezing, handling used place settings, serving food and after restroom visits.

## The following tips can help reduce your risk:

- Sanitize food surfaces after any contact with raw food, when switching from one food product to another, or at least every four hours.
- Inspect all packaged food for damage and spoilage and dispose of promptly.
- Date-label all refrigerated and dry-storage food containers, and monitor daily.
- Place newer stock at the rear and move old stock to the front.
- Perform weekly checks on all refrigerators/freezers to ensure proper performance. Cool stored food to at least 40 degrees and freeze at 0 degrees. Avoid overloading coolers and freezers. Keep doors closed tightly when not in use.

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