

Consumer Good Practices

Foodborne Outbreaks Prevention

Ingestion of food contaminated with pathogenic microorganisms or their toxins can cause Foodborne diseases. The symptoms may begin around 10 minutes to more than 10 days after ingestion of the food. The most frequent symptoms are the gastrointestinal disorders (vomiting, nausea, abdominal cramps and diarrhoea, sometimes accompanied by fever), although there may be foodborne outbreaks with disturbances in the cardiovascular, respiratory, nervous, endocrine, reproductive or immune systems or urinary tract, involving organs related with vital functions of the organism.

When you feel bad after eating:

- In more severe cases contact your doctor
- Don't touch foods, to avoid transmit the disease to others (microorganisms from the skin, nose, throat or excreted in the stool or vomiting are likely to contaminate the hands and the environment)

Follow food safety best practices during the purchase, transportation, storage, food preparation/cooking, up to the moment of consumption, in order to prevent food-borne diseases:



When shopping food



When storing/preparing food



By maintaining hygiene and cleaning



By separating raw food from cooked food



By cooking the food thoroughly



Food shopping

- ✓ Make a shopping list
- ✓ Choose good quality foods
- ✓ Separate raw and cooked foods
- ✓ Keep foods at a safe temperature (placing them in isothermal bags)
- ✓ Choose a variety of fresh and safety processed foods (e.g., pasteurized)
- ✓ Do not buy spoiled food
- ✓ Check the good condition of the package
- ✓ Read the label of the food product: name, origin, nutritional information, conservation mode, expiration date, method of preparation/cooking and other important information
- ✓ Buy food at room temperature first and lastly the chilled and frozen one, keeping them in isothermal bags
- ✓ Do not buy frozen food showing ice crystals (it has already thawed)
- ✓ Buy only foods within the period of validity
- ✓ Take the food home as soon as possible. If some food thaw on the way home, keep it refrigerated and cook it as soon as possible



Food storage

- ✓ Store food in covered containers to avoid contamination
- ✓ Keep perishable foods at refrigeration temperatures
- ✓ Store chilled foods first, then frozen foods and finally the room temperature foods
- ✓ Place the food ready to eat on the upper shelves of the refrigerator, the raw and the food to be defrosted on the shelves below and the fruits and vegetables in the drawer. Do not overfill the refrigerator and freezer to keep cold air circulation
- ✓ Do not store food too long even in the refrigerator
- ✓ Keep the equipment clean and functional, making their regular maintenance (defrost and clean the freezer periodically)





Food preparation

- ✓ Keep kitchen areas, tools and equipment clean and dry before and after use and between different tasks, especially after handling raw foods
- ✓ Do not use food beyond its expiry date
- ✓ Do not thaw frozen food at room temperature
- ✓ Keep and handle raw and cooked food separately, washing your hands often and not using the same utensils
- ✓ Fix and clean up spilled food, dirty surfaces and equipment used as you go preparing/cooking food
- ✓ Wash thoroughly, under running water, eaten raw foods (fruits, vegetables)



Maintaining hygiene and cleaning

Wash your hands with drinking water before/during/after the preparation of food (especially after touching raw food) and after going to the bathroom, touching pets and garbage or smoking

→ Correct washing of the hands:

- 1 – Wet your hands with warm running water
- 2 – Lather your hands with SOAP
- 3 – Carefully wash the spaces between the fingers, the back and the palms of hands, thumbs and nails
- 4 – Rinse with warm running water
- 5 – Soaping your hands again, rubbing them for 20 seconds at least
- 6 – Rinse with warm running water
- 7 – Dry with a single use disposable paper towel to prevent the further spread of micro-organisms by wet hands or by multiple uses of dishcloths

Hygiene rules

- ✓ Wash and dry tools and equipments before and after use (cutting board, steamers, knives, cleaning cloths, mops), especially after handling raw foods
- ✓ Use clean utensils for cooked foods
- ✓ Wash and dried the dishes and other utensils preferably after meals
- ✓ Change the cloths and towels daily
- ✓ Place the remains of raw or cooked foods in the dustbin with lid and pour it and clean it daily
- ✓ Protect kitchen areas and food from insects, pests and other animals



Separate raw from cooked foods

- ✓ Raw foods can contain fluids or blood with micro-organisms, which can be transferred during preparation or storage to other ready-to-eat foods, making them a risk to the consumer
- ✓ **The proper handling of food can prevent food-borne diseases:**
 - ➔ Separate raw and cooked food, either in storage as in the preparation and cooking
 - ➔ Wash your hands after touching raw food
 - ➔ In the refrigerator, keep cooked food on the upper shelves and raw food on the bottom shelf
 - ➔ Use different clean equipment and utensils (knives, cutting boards) to handle raw and cooked foods
 - ➔ Place the frozen food in packages or containers (plastic, glass or stainless steel) to avoid cross-contamination, which is the transfer of microorganisms from contaminated foods (especially raw foods) to non contaminated foods (namely cooked or ready-to-eat foods)



Cooking the food thoroughly

- ✓ Minimize the time between cooling and cooking, cooking and consumption, cooking and cooling and cooling and consumption
- ✓ Cook, heat or reheat the food to more than 70° C to kill the micro-organisms making sure that juices are clear, not pink (e.g. meatloaf, large pieces of meat, whole birds)
- ✓ Make sure that all the food was wholly subjected to safe temperature in stove, oven, grill and specially microwave oven
- ✓ Taste the food using only once clean utensils
- ✓ Cover the food to be consumed, to avoid contamination
- ✓ Keep warm dishes above 60° C, in stove or oven, until the moment of consumption
- ✓ Keep cold foods in the refrigerator until the time to serve
- ✓ Avoid manipulating the cooked food with your hands. Use clean spoons, spatulas (others)
- ✓ Refrigerate promptly all cooked and perishable food, preferably below 5°C.
- ✓ Do not leave cooked food at room temperature for more than 2 hours

