

# 7 Steps to Food Safety



When preparing food for family, friends, or the community, it's important to know how to safely prepare and store large quantities of food for large groups. Food that is not handled properly can cause foodborne illnesses.

By following these seven simple steps, you can prevent your guests from getting foodborne illnesses and enjoy a successful and safe event.

## 1. Plan Ahead

**Make sure the location meets your needs.**

- Be sure to have enough oven, stovetop, refrigerator, freezer, and work space.
- Find out if there's a source of clean water. If not, bring water with you to prepare and clean

## 2. Store and Prepare Food Safely

- Refrigerate or freeze perishable food within 2 hours of shopping or preparing; 1 hour when the temperature is above 90° F.
- Find separate preparation areas in the workspace for raw and cooked food.
- Never place cooked food back on the same plate or cutting board that held raw food.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and work surfaces frequently with hot, soapy water.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food, and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets.

## Prepare with Care!

### **CLEAN.**

Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces often.

### **SEPARATE.**

Don't cross-contaminate.

### **COOK.**

Use a food thermometer.

### **CHILL.**

Chill food promptly.

**For more information about food safety and preparation, speak with your Health Education team.**





### 3. Cook Food to Minimum Internal Temperatures

**It's the only way to tell if harmful bacteria are destroyed!**

- Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of meat, poultry, casseroles, and other food. Check temperature in several places to be sure food is cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature.
- Never partially cook food to finish later because you increase the risk of bacterial growth.

### 4. Transport Food Safely

**Keep hot food HOT. Keep cold food COLD.**

- Keep hot food at or above 140° F. Wrap well and place in an insulated container.
- Keep cold food at or below 40° F. Place in a cooler with a cold source, such as ice or frozen gel packs.

### 5. Keep Food Out of the Danger Zone (40-140° F)

- Keep hot food hot – at or above 140° F. Place cooked food in chafing dishes, preheated steam tables, warming trays, and/or slow cookers.
- Keep cold food cold – at or below 40° F. Place food in containers on ice.

### 6. Need to Reheat?

**Food must be hot and steamy for serving. Just “warmed up” is not good enough.**

- Use the stove, oven, or microwave to reheat food to 165° F. Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a boil.

### 7. When in Doubt, Throw it Out

- Throw away any food left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours; 1 hour when the temperature is above 90° F.
- Place leftovers in shallow containers. Refrigerate or freeze immediately.

Source: [www.BeFoodSafe.gov](http://www.BeFoodSafe.gov)