

Tips for Safe Food Handling

Reference: FOSCOS

<https://foscoss.fssai.gov.in/consumergrievance/tips-for-safe-food>

CLEAN: Wash Hands and Surfaces Often

Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and onto hands, cutting boards, utensils, countertops, and food. To ensure that your hands and surfaces are clean, follow these guidelines:

1. Wash Hands Properly:

- Use warm water and soap.
- **Scrub for at least 20 seconds.**
- Wash before and after handling food, and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets.

2. Clean Kitchen Surfaces:

- Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item.
- Use paper towels for cleaning up kitchen surfaces. If you use cloth towels, wash them often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.

3. Clean Fruits and Vegetables:

- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water.
- Rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush.

4. Clean Canned Goods:

- Clean lids of canned goods before opening.

SEPARATE: Separate Raw Meats from Other Foods

Cross-contamination occurs when bacteria spread from one food product to another, especially raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs. Prevent cross-contamination by following these tips:

1. Separate in Grocery Cart and Bags:

- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from other foods in your grocery shopping cart and grocery bags.

2. Use Separate Cutting Boards:

- Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.

3. Do Not Reuse Plates:

- Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs.

4. Marinades:

- Don't reuse marinades used on raw foods unless you bring them to a boil first.

COOK: Cook to the Right Temperatures

Proper cooking ensures harmful bacteria are killed. Use these practices to cook food safely:

1. Use a Food Thermometer:

- Measure the internal temperature of cooked foods.
- Check the temperature in several places to ensure even cooking.

2. Cook Ground Meat Thoroughly:

- Cook ground meat or ground poultry until it reaches a safe internal temperature.
- Remember, color is not a reliable indicator of doneness.

3. **Cook Eggs Properly:**

- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm.
- Only use recipes where eggs are cooked or heated thoroughly.

4. **Microwave Cooking:**

- Cover food, stir, and rotate for even cooking.
- Allow standing time to complete the cooking before checking the temperature.

5. **Reheating:**

- Bring sauces, soups, and gravy to a boil when reheating.

CHILL: Refrigerate Foods Promptly

Cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. Proper refrigeration is crucial for food safety:

1. **Refrigerate Promptly:**

- Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, and other perishables within 2 hours of cooking or purchasing.
- Refrigerate within 1 hour if the temperature outside is above 90°F.

2. **Thaw Safely:**

- Never thaw food at room temperature.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave. Cook food thawed in cold water or the microwave immediately.

3. **Marinate in the Refrigerator:**

- Always marinate food in the refrigerator.

4. **Cool Leftovers Quickly:**

- Divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.

5. Monitor Refrigerator Temperature:

- Keep the refrigerator temperature at 40°F or below and the freezer temperature at 0°F or below.
- Use an appliance thermometer to check temperatures regularly.

By following these tips, you can ensure your food is handled safely, reducing the risk of foodborne illnesses.