

Food Safety Tips for Personal Food Preparation

Whether at home or in the park, people in Saskatchewan love gathering with friends and family to share food. Practicing safe food handling helps keep these moments enjoyable while protecting the health of those we care about.

Introduction

Safe food handling minimizes the risk of food poisoning caused by contaminated food. Proper cooking, cleaning, chilling and separating foods, along with good hygiene, greatly reduce the risk.

Use the following tips to protect yourself, your family and your friends.

Handwashing

- Wash with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds whenever a sink is available.
- Use regular liquid hand soap.
- Wash before and after handling raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- Wash after touching pets, changing diapers or using the bathroom.
- If a sink is not available, clean hands with a wet towelette (such as a baby wipe), then apply an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Temperature Control

Keep cold foods cold

- Keep refrigerators at 4°C (40°F) or colder.
- Always marinate food in the refrigerator and keep it cold until cooking. Do not reuse marinade.
- Keep coolers cold with ice. Consider using a thermometer to monitor the temperature.
- Transport perishable foods such as raw hamburger patties, sausages and chicken in an insulated cooler packed with ice, frozen gel packs or containers of ice.
- The safest way to thaw food, especially raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood, is in the refrigerator.



Temperature Control

Keep hot foods hot

- Do not partially cook food. Stopping before it reaches a safe temperature allows harmful bacteria to survive and multiply.
- Cook food completely and use a clean, sanitized thermometer to measure the temperature.
- When cooking outdoors, wind, cold and other conditions can affect cooking times. Always use a thermometer to check the internal temperature.
- Keep cooked foods at 60° C (140° F) or hotter until served.
- Eat hot or cold take-out foods within two hours of purchase.
- Keep hot foods such as soup, chili and stew in an insulated container if you do not have a heating source. Preheat the container with boiling water, empty it, add the hot food, close it and eat within two hours.
- Pack leftovers into a cooler and transfer them to a refrigerator as soon as possible. Food should not be left out for more than two hours.

Cook Meat Thoroughly

Colour alone does not indicate whether food is safe to eat. Always use a food thermometer and follow recommended internal cooking temperatures.

- Beef, pork, lamb and veal (steaks, chops, roasts):
145 F (63 C)
- Ground beef, pork, lamb and veal:
160 F (71 C)
- Poultry:
165 F (74 C)

Sanitation and Separation

- Keep raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood separate from other foods in the refrigerator by storing them in sealed food-grade containers on the bottom shelf to prevent contamination of ready-to-eat foods.
- Use separate equipment for raw and ready-to-eat foods.
- Never place cooked food on a plate that held raw meat or poultry, always use a clean plate for cooked items.
- Use clean utensils to prepare and serve cooked food. Do not reuse utensils that touched raw food.
- Clean and sanitize countertops, cutting boards and utensils before and after preparing food.
- Use a kitchen sanitizer as directed on the label or a bleach-water solution.
 - To make a sanitizing solution mix 1 teaspoon (5 mL) of bleach with 3 cups (750 mL) of water.
- If using disinfectant wipes, follow label instructions. Rinse surfaces with clean water afterward, if required, before placing food on them.
- Bring water for cleaning if none is available at the site. Pack disposable cloths or moist towelettes and paper towels for cleaning hands and surfaces.
- Wash and sanitize any plate or utensil that touched raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood before using it again.



General Tips

- Buy cold or frozen foods at the end of your shopping trip so they stay cold longer.
- Consider precooked foods, such as hot dogs, fully cooked sausages or store-bought precooked burgers that only require reheating, as they carry a lower risk than raw meats.
- Choose foods from approved suppliers to ensure they were produced and handled under safe, regulated conditions.
- Check the best-before date on food.
- Wash fruit and vegetables with potable water before use. Use a vegetable brush on firm produce (such as carrots and melons) before cutting or peeling them.
- Do not use soap or detergent to wash your produce.
- Use paper towels to clean kitchen surfaces. If using dishcloths, change them daily to reduce bacteria and cross-contamination.
- Wash reusable grocery bags frequently, especially those used for raw meat, poultry, fish, seafood or produce.

You cannot tell if food is unsafe by its smell or taste. When in doubt, throw it out!

Food Safety Incidents

Do not prepare food for others if you are sick, especially if you have had diarrhea or vomiting in the past 48 hours. Contact your local public health office if you develop:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Bloody or watery diarrhea

For more information on food safety and you, visit:
canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/general-food-safety-tips/food-safety-you.html

For information on food safety in public facilities, contact your local public health inspection office at:
saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/public-health/public-health-inspectors