



RENFREW COUNTY & DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

GUIDELINES FOR FOOD PREPARATION IN PRIVATE KITCHENS

There are **4 EASY steps** a food handler should take to eliminate harmful bacteria and reduce the risk of getting food poisoning when preparing food in your own home.

1. **Clean** – wash hands and surfaces often
2. **Chill** – refrigerate or freeze foods promptly
3. **Separate** – keep raw meat/poultry/seafood and their juices separate from one another and other foods
4. **Cook** – cook to proper temperatures

Studies estimate that about eighty-five percent of all cases of foodborne illness could be prevented if food is handled properly. Further studies suggest that most food poisonings occur in your own home (Source: Fightbac Campaign).

Anyone with cramps, nausea, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, open cuts or sores on the hands, etc. should not be allowed to prepare food. Those who prepare food should wear clean outer garments, hair restraints, and not smoke.

Keep the menu simple, and keep hazardous foods (meats, pasta salads, etc.) to a minimum.

Clean: wash hands and surfaces often

- Wash your hands before you begin cooking, after you use the restroom, take out garbage, handle dirty dishes.
- Wash you hands with warm water and soap. Use a paper towel to dry.
- The use of disposable **non-latex** gloves can provide an additional barrier to contamination, but gloves are no substitute for good handwashing.
- Always change gloves, wash hands, and sanitize utensils, cutting boards and surfaces when switching between foods. For example, when going from raw meats to cooked or ready-to-eat food like garden salads.
- Use a mixture of 1 teaspoon of household bleach to 1 litre of water to sanitize cutting boards, counter tops, knives, and other utensils that come in contact with food.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables, including those that you peel or cut, like melons, oranges or cucumbers.
- Always try to wash re-usable utensils in warm soapy water and then rinse in a bleach/water sanitizing solution.

Chill: refrigerate/freeze foods promptly

- Use the 2 hour rule – refrigerate or freeze all ready-to-eat foods within 2 hours of preparation to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria.
- Set the refrigerator temperature at or below 4°C (39°F) and keep a thermometer in the fridge to monitor the temperature. Try to avoid overpacking the fridge (cold air must be able to circulate).
- Make it a habit to marinate foods in the fridge.
- Never defrost foods at room temperature. Safe methods to defrost foods are in the fridge, under cold running water, or in the microwave (for small portions that will be cooked immediately).
- Cook thawed raw meats before refreezing. These products can be refrozen if ice crystals are still present.
- Always divide leftovers into smaller portions to allow for the heat to escape so the food can cool faster. Cover and refrigerate leftovers promptly.
- Remove stuffing from poultry immediately after roasting to allow for quicker cooling.

You can't tell if food is safe by smelling or looking at it. If in doubt, throw it out.

Separate: don't cross-contaminate

- Prevent raw meat juices from dripping onto other foods in the fridge – place in a container and store on the bottom shelf.
- Keep foods covered to protect them from insects, dust, etc.
- Store washed produce and leftover canned food in clean containers, not back into the original packaging or tin cans.
- It is a smart idea to use multiple cutting boards: one for raw meats and the other for cooked foods or washed fruits and vegetables.
- Always clean and sanitize cutting boards after use.
- Don't double dip – use a clean spoon each time when checking foods for seasoning.
- Do not use marinating sauce over cooked foods.

Cook: cook meats, dairy products and eggs to proper temperatures

- Use a probe thermometer to check cooking temperatures. This is the only way to tell if the food has reached a high enough internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria.
- Steaks and roasts can be enjoyed when cooked rare to medium doneness and beyond. Bacteria usually exist on the surface of these whole muscle cuts and are eliminated once the outside of the meat is well cooked. Rolled steaks and roasts should be cooked to medium doneness.
- Do not half-cook food and fully cook at a later time.
- Once food is cooked, always hot hold the food at a temperature of 60°C (140°F) or more.
- Always reheat leftovers to safe cooking temperatures as outlined below.

Use the following temperature chart as a guideline to cooking and reheating foods safely.

Temperature Rules for Safe Doneness	(Ministry of Health)
Ground Beef, pork	71°C or 160°F
Ground chicken, turkey	74°C or 165°F
Stuffed meats	74°C or 165°F
Poultry, other than whole poultry	74°C or 165°F
Whole poultry	82°C or 180°F
Pork and pork products	71°C or 160°F
Fish	70°C or 158°F
All other hazardous foods	70°C or 140°C

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