Food Safety Basics at Home

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Food can sometimes contain harmful germs that can make you sick. You can help prevent getting sick by following four basic food safety steps: clean, separate, cook, and chill.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact AHS.VDHFoodborne@vermont.gov.

Clean: Wash hands and surfaces often.

- Wash your hands with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food and before eating. Wash your hands after you handle raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs or surfaces that have touched raw items.
- Wash utensils, cutting boards, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing food.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water.

Separate: Keep raw foods separate to avoid cross-contamination.

- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from foods that are ready to eat.
- Store raw meat, poultry, and seafood in sealed containers or packages on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices cannot drip onto other foods.
- Use separate cutting boards and plates for raw foods and ready-to-eat foods.

Cook: Cook food to the right temperature.

Use a food thermometer to check that food is fully cooked to a safe internal temperature. Bring liquids to a boil when reheating.

Whole cuts of beef, veal, lamb, and pork, including fresh ham	145°F (63°C)
Fish	145°F (63°C)
Ground meat (beef and pork)	160°F (71°C)
All poultry, including ground chicken and turkey	165°F (74°C)
Leftovers and casseroles	165°F (74°C)
Egg and egg dishes (quiche)	160°F (71°C)

Chill: Keep food at a safe temperature.

- Refrigerate food within 2 hours, or 1 hour if exposed to temperatures above 90°F (32°C).
- Keep your refrigerator at 40°F (4°C) or below and your freezer at 0°F (-18°C) or below.
- Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator, in cold running water, or in the microwave. Don't thaw food on the counter.

Learn more at www.HealthVermont.gov/FoodSafety

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