

# Healthy Bite

## Dangerous Food Safety Mistakes

Practicing food safety is an important measure to prevent serious illness—1 in 6 Americans suffer from food poisoning each year. These common food safety mistakes might surprise you!

### **Mistake #1: Tasting food to see if it is still good**

**Why:** You can't taste (or smell or see) the bacteria that cause food poisoning. Tasting only a small amount can cause serious illness.

**Solution:** Throw food out before harmful bacteria grows. See the "Safe Storage Time Chart"

### **Mistake #2: Putting cooked meat back on a plate that held raw meat**

**Why:** Germs from the raw meat can spread to the cooked meat.

**Solution:** Always use separate plates for all meat, poultry and seafood.

### **Mistake #3: Thawing foods on the counter**

**Why:** Harmful bacteria can multiply very quickly at room temperature.

**Solution:** Thaw food safely:

- ✓ In the refrigerator
- ✓ In cold water
- ✓ In the microwave

### **Mistake #4: Washing meat or poultry**

**Why:** Washing raw meat, poultry or eggs can spread bacteria to your sink, countertops, and other surfaces.

**Solution:** Do not wash meat, poultry, or eggs.

### **Mistake #5: Letting food cool before putting in the fridge**

**Why:** Bacteria can grow in perishable foods within 2 hours unless you refrigerate them.

**Solution:** Refrigerate perishable foods within 2 hours (or within 1 hour if the temperature is over 90° F).

### **Mistake #6: Eating raw cookie dough**

**Why:** Uncooked eggs may contain *Salmonella* or other harmful bacteria.

**Solution:** Always cook eggs thoroughly and avoid foods with raw or undercooked eggs.

### **Mistake #7: Marinating meat or seafood on the counter**

**Why:** Harmful bacteria in meat and seafood multiply rapidly at room temperature.

**Solution:** Always marinate meat, seafood and poultry in the refrigerator.

### **Mistake #8: Using raw meat marinade on cooked foods**

**Why:** Bacteria from the raw meat (poultry or seafood) can spread to the cooked food.

**Solution:** You can reuse marinade only if you bring to a boil just before using.

### **Mistake #9: Undercooking meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs.**

**Why:** Cooked food is safe only after it has been cooked to a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria.

**Solution:** Use a food thermometer. Reference the "Safe Minimum Cooking Temperature Chart" on the next page.

### **Mistake #10: Not washing your hands.**

**Why:** Germs and bacteria can contaminate the food that you or others eat.

**Solution:** Wash your hand the right way—for 20 seconds with soap and running water. Wash your hands often, but especially before and after making food, after using the bathroom, after coughing or sneezing and after handling animals.

## Safe Minimum Cooking Temperatures

Use this chart and a food thermometer to ensure a safe internal temperature of meat, poultry, seafood, and other cooked foods.

**Remember, you can't tell whether meat is safely cooked just by looking at it.** Any cooked, uncured red meats—including pork—can be pink, even when the meat has reached a safe internal temperature.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Food</u>	<u>Temperature (°F)</u>
<b>Ground Meat &amp; Meat Mixtures</b>	<b>Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb</b>	<b>160</b>
	<b>Turkey, Chicken</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb</b>	<b>Steaks, Roasts, Chops</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Poultry</b>	<b>Chicken &amp; Turkey, Whole</b>	<b>165</b>
	<b>Poultry Breasts, Roasts</b>	<b>165</b>
	<b>Poultry Thighs, Legs, Wings</b>	<b>165</b>
	<b>Duck &amp; Goose</b>	<b>165</b>
	<b>Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Pork and Ham</b>	<b>Fresh Pork</b>	<b>145</b>
	<b>Fresh Ham (raw)</b>	<b>145</b>
	<b>Precooked Ham (to reheat)</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Egg &amp; Egg Dishes</b>	<b>Eggs</b>	<b>Cook until yolk and white are firm</b>
	<b>Egg Dishes</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Leftovers &amp; Casseroles</b>	<b>Leftovers</b>	<b>165</b>
	<b>Casseroles</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Seafood</b>	<b>Fin Fish</b>	<b>145 or until flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork</b>
	<b>Shrimp, Lobster, and Crabs</b>	<b>Cook until flesh is pearly and opaque</b>
	<b>Clams, Oysters, and Mussels</b>	<b>Cook until shells open during cooking</b>
	<b>Scallops</b>	<b>Cook until flesh is milky white or opaque and firm</b>

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### Questions?

If you have any questions on this or any nutrition-related topic, or have an idea for a future *Healthy Bite* topic, please call our registered dietitian, Lori Harvey RD, LD. You can reach her by telephone at 330-376-7717 extension 140 or by email [lharvey@mobilemealsinc.org](mailto:lharvey@mobilemealsinc.org).