

Food Safety

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church

Mishandled Food

Food that is mishandled can cause very serious consequences for all, especially for “at-risk” groups— infants, young children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems. For this reason it is important that volunteers be especially careful when preparing and serving food to large groups.

What Is Foodborne Illness?

Foodborne illness, or food poisoning, often presents itself as flu-like symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever, so many people may not recognize that the illness may be caused by bacteria or other pathogens in food. Millions of cases of foodborne illness occur each year and most can be prevented. Proper cooking or processing of food destroys bacteria.

Who Is At Risk

Age and physical condition place some persons at higher risk than others, no matter what type of bacteria is implicated. Infants and young children, pregnant women and their unborn babies, and older adults are at higher risk for foodborne illness, as are people with weakened immune systems (such as those with, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, and transplant patients). Some persons may become ill after ingesting only a few harmful bacteria; others may remain symptom free after thousands.

How Bacteria Gets In Food

Bacteria may be present on products when you purchase them. Plastic-wrapped boneless chicken and ground meat, for example, were once part of live chickens or cattle. Raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs are not sterile. Neither is fresh produce such as lettuce, tomatoes, sprouts, and melons.

How Bacteria Gets In Food

Foods, including safely cooked, ready-to-eat foods, can become cross-contaminated with bacteria transferred from raw products, meat juices or other contaminated products, or from food handlers with poor personal hygiene.

Invisible Enemy Ready To Strike

When preparing for your special event, remember that there may be an invisible enemy ready to strike. It's called BAC (bacteria) and it can make you sick. This problem is more serious than many people realize. In fact, one in six Americans will get sick from food poisoning this year alone. But by following four simple steps, you can protect your families and friends and keep your food safe.

Check Your Steps

Clean—Wash hands and surfaces often.

Separate—Separate raw meats from other foods.

Cook—Cook to the right temperature.

Chill—Refrigerate food promptly.

Four Simple Steps



When You Plan

Select a reliable person to be in charge. The person-in-charge should provide instructions to the volunteers, answer questions, and oversee the preparation, service, and cleanup of the event.

Make sure you have the right equipment, including cutting boards, utensils, food thermometers, cookware, shallow containers for storage, soap, and paper towels.

When You Shop

Do not purchase canned goods that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted. These are the warning signs that dangerous bacteria may be growing in the can.

Separate raw meat, poultry, and seafood from other foods in your grocery shopping cart and in your refrigerator.

Buy cold foods last. You may want to take a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs for perishables. Refrigerate food within 1 hour.

When You Store Food

Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods, and leftovers within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F) of shopping or preparing. Place raw meat, poultry, and seafood in containers in the refrigerator, to prevent their juices from dripping on other foods. Raw juices may contain harmful bacteria.

When You Prepare Food

Wash hands and surfaces often. Bacteria can be spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, utensils, and counter tops. To prevent this:



Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food, and after using the bathroom, brushing your hair, sneezing, use common sense.

Use paper towels or clean cloths to wipe up kitchen surfaces or spills.

Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next item. A solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water may be used to sanitize washed surfaces and utensils. Or simply use the preset sanitization solution in the third compartment of the sink.

When Cutting Boards Are Used

- Always use a clean cutting board.
- Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- Once cutting boards become excessively worn or develop grooves, you should replace them.

Never Thaw Food At Room Temperature. Thaw Food:

- In the refrigerator.
- In the microwave, but cook the food immediately.
- Food may also be thawed in cold water. Be sure that the sink or container that holds food is clean before submerging food. Two methods may be used when thawing:
 - Completely submerge airtight wrapped package. Change water every 30 minutes.
 - Completely submerge airtight wrapped food in constantly running cold water.
- Cook food immediately after thawing.

When You Marinate

Always marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter.

Use food-grade plastic, stainless steel, or glass containers to marinate food.

Sauce that is used to marinate raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood should not be used on cooked foods, unless it is boiled before applying.

Never reuse marinades for other foods unless you boil them first.

Discard any leftover batter, or breading, after it has come in contact with raw food.

Use Common Sense

Rinse all fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water before use. Thick-skinned produce may be scrubbed with a brush. Do not use soap.

Food should not be tasted until it reaches a safe minimum internal temperature.

Do not use a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood unless the plate has first been washed in hot, soapy water.

When You Cook

Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of meat, poultry, casseroles, and other food. Check the temperature in several places to make sure the food is evenly heated. Wash the thermometer with hot, soapy water after use.

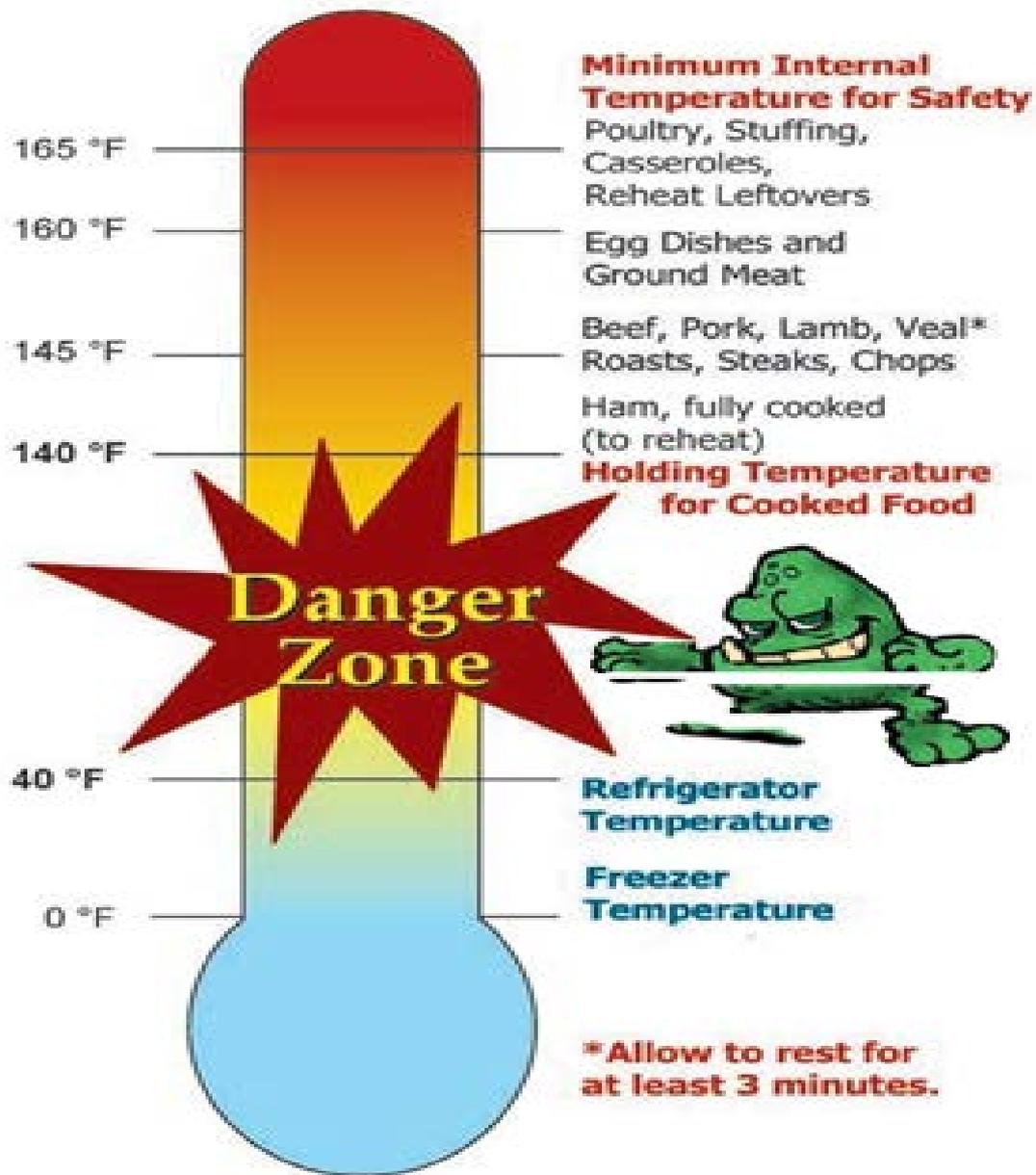
When You Cook

Never partially cook food for finishing later because you increase the risk of bacterial growth on the food. Bacteria are killed when foods reach a safe internal temperature.

When preparing food in the oven, set the oven to at least 325 °F. Cook food to the safe internal temperature. Check temperature in several places with a food thermometer.

Danger ZONE

Bacteria multiply rapidly between 40 and 140 °F. To keep food out of this “Danger Zone,” keep cold food cold and hot food hot. Keep food cold in the refrigerator, in coolers, or on the serving line on ice. Keep hot food in the oven, in heated chafing dishes, or in preheated steam tables, warming trays and/or slow cookers. Never leave perishable foods, such as meat, poultry, eggs and casseroles in the “Danger Zone” over 2 hours; 1 hour in temperatures above 90 °F.



When You Chill Food

Place food in the refrigerator.

Don't overfill the refrigerator. Cool air must circulate to keep food safe.

Divide food and place in shallow containers. Slice roast beef or ham and layer in containers in portions for serving.

Place soups or stews in shallow containers. To cool quickly, place in ice water bath and stir.

Cover and label cooked foods. Include the preparation date on the label.

When You Transport Food

Keep cold food cold. Place cold food in a cooler with a cold source such as ice or frozen gel packs. Use plenty of ice or frozen gel packs. Keep an appliance thermometer in the cooler. Cold food should be held at 40 °F or below.

Hot food should be kept hot, at or above 140 °F. Wrap well and place in an insulated container.

When You Reheat Food

Heat cooked, commercially vacuum-sealed, ready-to-eat foods, such as hams and roasts, to 140 °F.

Foods that have been cooked ahead and cooled should be reheated to at least 165 °F.

Reheat leftovers thoroughly to at least 165 °F. Reheat sauces, soups, and gravies to a boil.

Reheating In Slow Cookers

Reheating leftovers in slow cookers, steam tables or chafing dishes is not recommended because foods may stay in the “Danger Zone,” between 40 °F and 140 °F, too long. Bacteria multiply rapidly at these temperatures.

When You Keep Food Hot

Once food is cooked or reheated, it should be held hot, at or above 140 °F. Food may be held in an oven or on a serving line in heated chafing dishes, or on preheated steam tables, warming trays, and/or slow cookers. Always keep hot food hot.

Hot holding for extended periods may reduce the quality of the food.

Keep It Cold

Place cold food in containers on ice. Hold cold foods at or below 40 °F.

Food that will be portioned and served on the serving line should be placed in a shallow container. Place this container inside a deep pan filled partially with ice to keep food cold. Drain off water as ice melts and replace ice frequently.

When You Finish Up

Discard all perishable foods, such as meat, poultry, eggs and casseroles, left at room temperature longer than 2 hours; 1 hour in temperatures above 90 °F. Some exceptions to this rule are foods such as cookies, crackers, bread and whole fruit, as long as these items have remained wrapped.

Immediately refrigerate or freeze remaining leftovers in shallow containers.

Throw Away Potential Dangers

Any food items (I.E.-pretzels, salad dressings, salads, fruit, juice, cake, etc.) that have been brought out of the kitchen and placed on serving plates, in bowls, or in cups are NOT to be repackaged or reused, these items are to be thrown away. Any foods that have been maintained at safe temperatures and are to be reused must be marked and dated.

Hand Washing Dishes

Any organization using the kitchen must use the three step dish washing process for all hand washed dishes. This system was put in place and maintained at a cost to the parish and is for the safety of all of our guests.