

Food Safety: What You Don't Know CAN Hurt YOU!

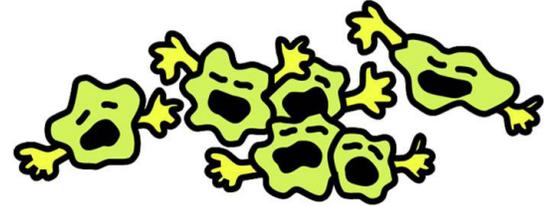


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Don't be "Myth"-led by these 10 food safety myths:

MYTH 1: If it tastes okay, it's safe to eat.

FACT 1: Don't count on your sense of smell, taste and sight to tell if a food is safe. Each year in the United States, about 48 million people become ill from a foodborne illness and 3,000 people die.



Would this many people eat something if they thought it tasted, looked or smelled bad? Why risk getting sick. A "tiny taste" may not protect you. As few as 10 bacteria could cause some foodborne illnesses, such as *E. coli*!

MYTH 2: If you get sick from eating a food, it was from the last food you ate.

FACT 2: It can take 1/2 hour to 6 weeks to become sick from unsafe foods. You usually feel OK immediately after eating and become sick later.

MYTH 3: The worst that could happen to you with a foodborne illness is an upset stomach.

FACT 3: You also can experience: vomiting, fever, diarrhea, dehydration. Less common, but possible severe conditions include: Meningitis, paralysis and death.

MYTH 4: If I've never been sick from the food I prepare, I don't need to worry about feeding it to others.

FACT 4: Some people have a greater risk for foodborne illnesses. A food you can safely eat might make others sick. People with a higher risk for foodborne illness include: Infants, pregnant women, young children and older adults and people with weakened immune systems and individuals with certain chronic diseases.

MYTH 5: People never used to get sick from their food.

FACT 5: Many incidents of foodborne illness went undetected in the past. Symptoms of nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea were often and still are blamed on the "flu."

Foodborne Illness vs. Flu	
<p>More Common in Foodborne Illness: Gastrointestinal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nausea • Vomiting • Diarrhea 	<p>More Common in Flu: Respiratory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chest discomfort • Cough • Nasal congestion • Sore throat • Runny or stuffy nose

Also, over the years, bacteria have gotten more virulent. And, our food now travels farther with more chances for contamination. In days gone by, the chicken served at supper may have been in the hen house at noon!

Know how. Know now.



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MYTH 6: As long as I left the lid on a food that has set out too long, it is safe to eat.

FACT 6: Though food may be safe after cooking, it may not be safe later. Just one bacteria in the food can double in 20 minutes!

As many as 2,097,152 bacteria can grow from one bacteria left at room temperature 7 hours. Refrigerate perishable foods within two hours at a refrigerator temperature of 40°F or lower. On a hot day (90°F or higher), food should not sit out for more than one hour.

MYTH 7: If you let a food set out more than two hours, you can make it safe by heating it really hot!

FACT 7: Some bacteria, such as Staphylococcus (staph), produce toxins not destroyed by high cooking temperatures.

MYTH 8: If a hamburger is brown in the middle, it is cooked to a safe internal temperature.

FACT 8: 1 out of 4 hamburgers turns brown before it has been cooked to a safe internal temperature.

Research shows some ground beef patties look done at internal temperatures as low as 135°F. A temperature of 160°F is needed to destroy E. coli.

MYTH 9: Meat and poultry should be washed before cooking.

FACT 9: Washing is NOT necessary or recommended. Washing increases the danger of cross-contamination, spreading bacteria present on the surface of meat and poultry to:

- ready-to-eat foods
- kitchen utensils
- counter surfaces

Cooking meat and poultry to USDA recommended safe minimum temperatures makes them safe to eat:	
• Beef, veal, lamb: steaks & roasts - 145°F	• Beef, veal, lamb: ground - 160°F
• Fish - 145°F	• Egg dishes - 160°F
• Pork - 160°F	• Turkey, chicken & duck: whole, pieces & ground - 165°F

MYTH 10: We should be scared of eating almost everything!

FACT 10: “... the American food supply continues to be among the safest in the world.” (Source: Robert E. Brackett, Ph.D., Director, CFAN/FDA, 11/15/2006. <http://www.hhs.gov/asl/testify/t061115a.html> accessed 6/21/2010).

Proper food handling helps assure food is safe to eat:

- **Clean:** Wash hands and surfaces often.
- **Separate:** Don't cross-contaminate
- **Cook:** Cook to proper temperatures
- **Chill:** Refrigerate Promptly

Resources:

Alabama Cooperative Extension System. The Food Spoilers: Bacteria and Viruses. <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/H/HE-0654> (Accessed 6/21/2010).
CDC. CDC Estimates of Foodborne Illness in the United States. <http://www.cdc.gov/foodborneburden/2011-foodborne-estimates.html> (Accessed 3/9/2011)
USDA. "Is it done yet?" http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/IsItDoneYet_Magnet.pdf (Accessed 6/21/2010).
USDA. Safe Food Handling – How Temperatures Affect Food. http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/how_temperatures_affect_food/index.asp (Accessed 6/21/2010).
USDA. Thermometers are Key. http://origin-www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Thermometers_Are_Key_FactSheet.pdf (Accessed 6/21/2010).
USDA. Why Does USDA Recommend Using a Food Thermometer? <http://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/thermometer.html> (Accessed 6/21/2010).
U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Bad Bug Book: Foodborne Pathogenic Microorganisms and Natural Toxins Handbook – Onset, Duration, and Symptoms of Foodborne Illness. Available at <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/FoodborneIllness/FoodborneIllnessFoodbornePathogensNaturalToxins/Bad-BugBook/ucm071342.htm> (Accessed 6/21/2010).

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