

Safer Food Choices for Adults 65 Years or Older

Nebraska Extension

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How many people get sick each year from a foodborne illness?

- a. 1 out of 100
- b. 1 out of 50
- c. 1 out of 10
- d. 1 out of 6



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Estimates of foodborne illnesses in the U.S. each year:

- 48 million people get sick
- 128,000 are hospitalized
- 3,000 people die



Foodborne Illness

Common symptoms:

- Diarrhea and cramping
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Low-grade fever
- Body aches

Rare symptoms:

- System shutdown
- Coma
- Death



Why is food safety especially important for those over the age of 65?

Older adults have a higher risk of:

- Getting a foodborne illness
- Having a more serious illness



Some foods
are safer
choices and
some are
more often
linked with
foodborne
illnesses.



Poultry and Meat - Riskier Choices

- Raw or undercooked poultry or meat
- Unheated deli meat, cold cuts, hot dogs, and fermented or dry sausages
- Refrigerated meat spreads



Poultry and Meat - Safer Choices

- Poultry and meat cooked to a safe internal temperature. Use a food thermometer to check.
- Deli meat, cold cuts, hot dogs, and fermented or dry sausages heated to 165°F or until steaming hot
- Meat spreads in sealed, airtight containers that don't need to be kept refrigerated before opening



Deli Salads - Riskier Choices

- Premade deli salads, such as:
 - Coleslaw
 - Potato salad
 - Tuna salad
 - Chicken salad
 - Egg salad





Salads - Safer Choices

- Homemade salads, such as:
 - Coleslaw
 - Potato salad
 - Tuna salad
 - Chicken salad
 - Egg salad



Fruits and Vegetables

- Riskier Choices

- Any raw or undercooked sprouts, such as alfalfa
- Unwashed fresh fruits and vegetables, including lettuce and other leafy greens
- Cut melon left out for more than 2 hours (1 hour if it's exposed to temperatures above 90°F)
- Unpasteurized juice or cider

Fruits and Vegetables

- Safer Choices

- Cooked sprouts (until steaming hot)
- Washed vegetables and fruits (washed and then cooked are safest)
- Freshly cut melon or cut melon kept refrigerated for 7 or fewer days
- Pasteurized juice or cider



Milk and Cheese - Riskier Choices

- Unpasteurized (raw) milk, and dairy products made from unpasteurized milk
- Soft cheese made from unpasteurized (raw) milk— for example, queso fresco, brie, camembert, and blue-veined cheese
- Unheated cheese sliced at a deli





Milk and Cheese - Safer Choices

- Pasteurized milk and dairy products made from pasteurized milk
- Hard cheese, such as cheddar and swiss
- Cottage cheese, cream cheese, string cheese, and feta
- Pasteurized soft cheeses heated to an internal temperature of 165°F or until steaming hot
- Deli-sliced cheeses heated to 165°F or until steaming hot

Eggs - Riskier Choices

- Raw or undercooked (runny) eggs, and foods that contain raw or undercooked eggs, such as:
 - Caesar salad dressing
 - Raw cookie dough
 - Eggnog





Eggs - Safer Choices

- Eggs cooked until the yolks and whites are firm
- Egg dishes (frittata, quiche, casserole) cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F if they contain meat or poultry or 160°F if they do not contain meat or poultry
- Pasteurized eggs in foods that will not be cooked to a safe temperature, such as mousse and salad dressing



Seafood - Riskier Choices

- Raw or undercooked fish or shellfish, including sashimi, sushi, and ceviche
- Refrigerated smoked seafood (except in a cooked dish). Refrigerated smoked seafood is usually labeled as “nova-style,” “lox,” “kippered,” “smoked,” or “jerky”

Seafood - Safer Choices

- Fish cooked to a safe internal temperature of 145°F or until the flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork
- Shellfish cooked until shells open during cooking or until flesh is pearly or white, and opaque
- Smoked fish in sealed, airtight packages or containers that don't need to be kept refrigerated before opening
- Smoked fish cooked in a casserole or other cooked dishes
- Canned fish and seafood



Flour - Riskier Choices

- Raw dough or raw batter made with raw (uncooked) flour



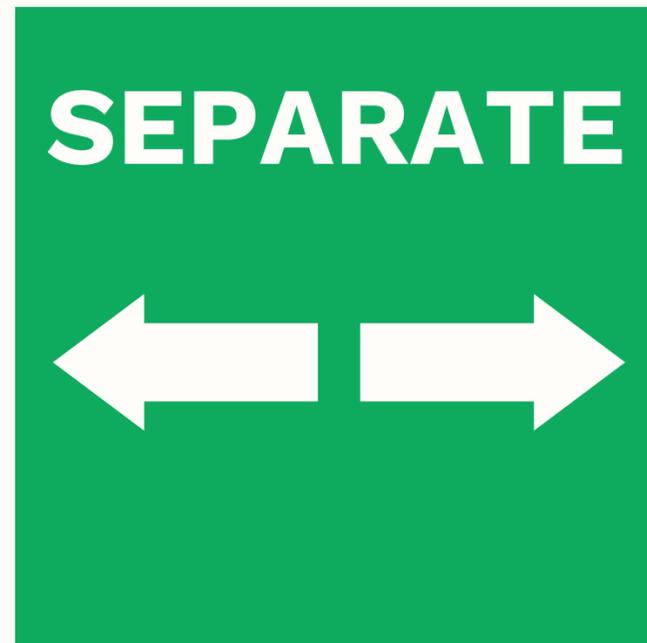
Flour - Safer Choices

- Food made with flour that is cooked following the package directions or recipe
- Dough and batter made with heat-treated flour and pasteurized eggs
- Dough and batter that is labeled “edible” or “safe to eat raw”



Preventing Foodborne Illness

Always follow the four steps to food safety:



Sources:

- 4 Steps to Food Safety, foodsafety.gov: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/4-steps-to-food-safety>
- Food Safety A Need-to-Know Guide for Those at Risk, United States Department of Agriculture:
- People at Risk - Older Adults, foodsafety.gov: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/people-at-risk/older-adults>
- Preventing Listeria, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/listeria/prevention.html>
- Safer Food Choices for Adults Age 65 and Older, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/foods/adults-65-older.html>



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