



# Home Food Safety®

[www.homefoodsafety.org](http://www.homefoodsafety.org)

A Collaboration Between



Academy of Nutrition  
and Dietetics



ConAgra Foods  
Food you love

## **Home Food Safety**

HomeFoodSafety.org

### *Reduce Your Risk of Food Poisoning*

Your risk of food poisoning can be dramatically reduced by safely preparing food at home, yet 1 in 6 Americans is sickened by food poisoning each year. That's why the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics teamed up with ConAgra Foods to create the Home Food Safety program, a public awareness campaign that provides simple solutions for safely and easily handling food at home.

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### **About the Academy**

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association) is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy. Visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at [eatright.org](http://eatright.org).

### **About ConAgra Foods**

ConAgra Foods, Inc., (NYSE: CAG) is one of North America's leading food companies, with brands in 97 percent of America's households. Consumers find *Banquet*, *Chef Boyardee*, *Egg Beaters*, *Healthy Choice*, *Hebrew National*, *Hunt's*, *Marie Callender's*, *Orville Redenbacher's*, *PAM*, *Peter Pan*, *Reddi-wip*, *Slim Jim*, *Snack Pack* and many other ConAgra Foods brands in grocery, convenience, mass merchandise and club stores.

ConAgra Foods also has a strong business-to-business presence, supplying frozen potato and sweet potato products as well as other vegetable, spice and grain products to a variety of well-known restaurants, foodservice operators and commercial customers. For more information, please visit us at [conagrafoods.com](http://conagrafoods.com).

# Food Poisoning Basics

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What is food poisoning? Caused by foodborne pathogens, food poisoning causes an estimated 48 million illnesses (1 out of 6 Americans), 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths each year in the United States, according to a 2011 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## **WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?**

[Eight known pathogens](#) account for the vast majority of food poisoning outbreaks: *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Campylobacter*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *E. coli*, *Toxoplasma gondii* and Norovirus.

## **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**

The [symptoms](#) and severity of food poisoning vary, but common symptoms include upset stomach, abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, fever and dehydration.

## **WHO'S AT RISK?**

Everyone has some risk of contracting food poisoning, but some people are more vulnerable and can be at far greater risk of developing serious illness with long-term effects. Those [high-risk](#) groups include [older adults](#), [infants and young children](#), [pregnant women](#) and people with weakened immune systems and chronic illness such as diabetes, kidney disease, HIV/AIDS and some cancer patients.

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## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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Safely handling food means more than just washing your hands before you eat. How you handle food while you shop, cook and eat can significantly reduce your risk of food poisoning, so follow these four easy steps:



**1. WASH**  
hands often



**2. SEPARATE**  
raw meat, poultry,  
seafood and  
eggs from ready-  
to-eat foods



**3. COOK**  
to proper  
temperatures



**4. REFRIGERATE**  
perishable foods  
promptly at  
40°F or below



# WASH

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Wash hands and surfaces often;  
wash produce before eating

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# Why it matters

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Illness-causing bacteria can survive in many places around your kitchen, including your hands, utensils and cutting boards. Unless you wash your hands, utensils and surfaces the right way, you could spread bacteria to your food and your family.

**WASH HANDS** for at least 20 seconds (or the time it takes to sing two choruses of “Happy Birthday”) in warm, soapy water. Be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails. [Wash hands](#) before preparing foods and after handling raw meat, poultry and seafood, and wash your hands when switching tasks.

**WASH SURFACES AND UTENSILS** with hot, soapy water after each use, including appliances, [countertops](#), [cutting boards](#) and utensils.

**WASH DISHCLOTHS, SPONGES AND TOWELS** often in the hot cycle of your washing machine. [Disinfect sponges](#) in a chlorine bleach solution and replace worn sponges frequently.

**WASH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES** whether organic or conventional, thoroughly before eating. And even if you plan on peeling fruits and veggies, wash them first because bacteria can spread from the outside to the inside as you cut or peel them.

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## DID YOU KNOW?



Proper hand washing may eliminate nearly half of all cases of food poisoning and significantly reduce the spread of the common cold and flu.



[A 2013 study](#) analyzing outbreaks of foodborne illness found contaminated salad greens make the most people sick. Wash produce before eating.



# SEPARATE

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Don't cross-contaminate

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# Why it matters

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Even after you've cleaned your hands and surfaces thoroughly, raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs can still spread illness-causing bacteria to ready-to-eat foods—unless you keep them separate. When juices from raw meats or germs from unclean objects accidentally touch cooked or ready-to-eat foods like bread or vegetables, [cross-contamination](#) occurs. Keep foods separate before, during and after preparation.

**USE SEPARATE PLATES AND UTENSILS** for cooked and raw foods. Never double dip utensils or place cooked food back on the same plate or cutting board that previously held raw meat, poultry or seafood.

**AS YOU SHOP**, keep raw meat, poultry and seafood [separate](#) from other foods in your grocery cart and grocery bags or reusable totes. Place raw fish, seafood, meat and poultry in plastic bags to prevent juices from leaking.

**USE TWO CUTTING BOARDS:** one strictly to cut raw meat, poultry and seafood; the other for ready-to-eat foods, like breads and vegetables. Don't confuse them. Wash [cutting boards](#) thoroughly in hot, soapy water after each use or place in dishwasher. Discard old cutting boards that have cracks, crevices and excessive knife scars.

**IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR**, store raw fish, seafood, meat and poultry on a shelf below the ready-to-eat foods.

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## MARINATE SAFELY!



Don't cross-contaminate when [marinating foods](#), which can occur when a marinade is used with raw meat, poultry or fish, and then reused on cooked foods. Use a separate brush and marinade for raw meats and ready-to-eat foods. It's only okay to reuse marinade when boiled to destroy harmful bacteria.



# COOK

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Cook to the right temperature

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# Why it matters

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Cooking foods to a proper minimum internal temperature kills harmful pathogens. Many people think they can tell when food is “done” simply by checking its color and texture, but there’s no way to be sure it’s safe without following a few important but simple steps.

## USE A FOOD THERMOMETER

Don’t rely on sight or taste alone, a [food thermometer](#) is the *only* reliable way to determine the doneness of cooked foods, from pork and chicken to egg dishes, stuffing, microwave meals and leftovers.

## KEEP FOOD HOT AFTER COOKING

(at 140°F or above). The possibility of bacterial growth actually increases as food cools after cooking because the drop in temperature allows bacteria to thrive. But you can keep your food above the safe temperature of 140°F by using a heat source like a chafing dish, warming tray or [slow cooker](#).



For a list of safe minimum internal temperatures visit [HomeFoodSafety.org/cook](https://www.homefoodsafety.org/cook) or download the free [Is My Food Safe?](#) app.

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## DID YOU KNOW?



One out of every four hamburgers turn brown before it reaches a safe temperature. Don’t rely upon sight alone to tell if it’s done. A food thermometer is the only reliable way to ensure food is safely cooked.

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# REFRIGERATE

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Refrigerate perishable food  
promptly to 40°F or below

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# Why it matters

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By refrigerating foods promptly and properly, you can help keep food safe by slowing the growth of harmful bacteria.

**QUICKLY REFRIGERATE** foods to slow bacteria growth and prevent food poisoning. Perishable foods cannot be left out for longer than two hours (or one hour if the temperature is above 90°F). When shopping, the two-hour window includes the amount of time food is in the grocery basket, car and on the kitchen counter.

**USE A REFRIGERATOR THERMOMETER** to ensure the refrigerator is set at 40°F or below and the freezer at 0°F or below.

## TOSS EXPIRED FOODS

You can't taste, see or even smell the bacteria that causes food poisoning, and tasting just a tiny bit of [contaminated food](#) can cause serious illness. If you are unsure of the expiration date or how long it has been unrefrigerated, remember: *When it doubt, throw it out!*

## NEVER MARINATE OR THAW FOODS ON THE COUNTER

Bacteria can multiply rapidly at room temperature so marinate food in the refrigerator, and [thaw food](#) in the refrigerator or use another safe method. Learn more at [HomeFoodSafety.org](https://www.homefoodsafety.org).

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### FOOD SAFETY MISTAKE!



Letting food cool before putting it in the refrigerator is a common food safety mistake. Illness-causing bacteria can grow in perishable foods within two hours unless you refrigerate them, so refrigerate hot foods promptly in a shallow, sealed container.

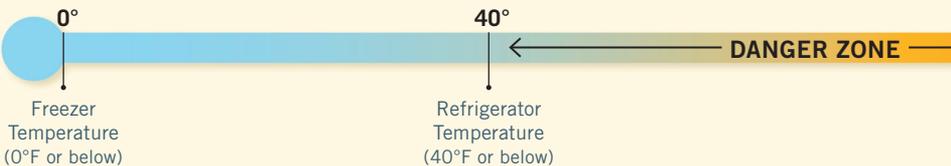
# Keep It Cool: Refrigerator/Freezer Food Storage Chart

Properly storing foods can help maintain their quality. Make sure perishable foods never sit out of refrigeration for more than two hours, and follow the expiration dates to ensure taste and safety. If no expiration date is available on the package, the following refrigeration guidelines provide a helpful gauge. Freezing is also a smart storage option for shoppers who wish to extend the shelf life of perishable foods beyond their expiration dates. But whether you're freezing or refrigerating, one basic rule applies: *When in doubt, throw it out!*

perishable foods	refrigerator (below 40°F)	freezer (at or below 0°F)		
 <p><b>meat</b> beef, pork, veal, lamb</p>	steaks	3 to 5 days	6 to 12 months	
	chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months	
	roasts	3 to 5 days	6 to 9 months	
	liver, variety meats	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months	
	cooked meat	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months	
	ground meat – uncooked – cooked	1 to 2 days 3 to 4 days	4 months	
 <p><b>bacon, sausage</b></p>	bacon – opened – unopened	1 week 2 weeks	1 month	
	sausage (meat or poultry) – raw – pre-cooked/smoked	1 to 2 days 1 week	1 to 2 months 1 to 2 months	
	summer sausage (labeled 'keep refrigerated') – opened – unopened	3 weeks 3 months	1 to 2 months	
	pepperoni, sliced	2 to 3 weeks	1 to 2 months	
	 <p><b>eggs</b></p>	fresh, in shell	3 to 5 weeks	do not freeze
		egg whites & yolks (raw)	2 to 4 days	1 year
egg substitutes – opened – unopened		3 days 10 days	does not freeze well 1 year	

## The Danger Zone

Did you know that the bacteria that cause food poisoning multiply quickest in the “Danger Zone” between 40° and 140° Fahrenheit?





**poultry**  
chicken,  
turkey

perishable foods	refrigerator (below 40°F)	freezer (at or below 0°F)
poultry, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
poultry, pieces (breasts, thighs, wings)	1 to 2 days	9 months
giblets	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
cooked poultry	3 to 4 days	4 months
ground poultry		
– uncooked	1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months
– cooked	3 to 4 days	3 to 4 months



**hot dogs,  
lunch meat**

hot dogs		
– opened	1 week	1 to 2 months
– unopened	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
lunch meat		
– opened	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
– unopened	2 weeks	1 to 2 months



**ham,  
corned  
beef**

corned beef (in pouch with pickling juices)	5 to 7 days	drained, 1 month
fresh ham, uncooked		
– uncured	3 to 5 days	6 months
– cured (cooked-before-eating)	5 to 7 days	3 to 4 months
ham, fully cooked, store wrapped		
– whole	1 week	
– half	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
– slices	3 to 4 days	
ham, fully cooked (vacuum sealed)		
– undated, unopened	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
– dated, unopened	Use-by date	
ham, canned (labeled 'keep refrigerated')		
– opened	1 week	1 to 2 months
– unopened	6 to 9 months	do not freeze



**dairy**

cheese, hard or processed		
– opened	3 to 4 weeks	6 months
– unopened	6 months	
cheese, soft	1 week	6 months
cottage/ricotta cheese	1 week	do not freeze
cream cheese	2 weeks	do not freeze
butter	1 to 3 months	6 to 9 months



\*allow to rest for at least 3 minutes

# Learn More

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[HomeFoodSafety.org](https://www.HomeFoodSafety.org) offers a variety of resources including:

## **LEARN FROM EXPERTS:**

Get answers to the food safety questions on your mind with a variety of articles and videos featuring registered dietitian nutritionists—the food and nutrition experts.

## **EDUCATIONAL TOOLS:**

Check out our food safety fact sheets, guidelines, interactive quizzes, videos and other food safety education resources to help others learn ways they can reduce their risk of food poisoning.

## **RESOURCES FOR KIDS:**

From washing hands to reading a food thermometer, teach kids simple steps to reduce their risk of food poisoning with fun, educational activities and games for the classroom or at home.

## **CHEAT SHEETS AND GUIDES:**

Reducing your risk of food poisoning is easy with free tip sheets and resources to download, print and share.

## **INTERACTIVE QUIZZES:**

Test your knowledge and the safety of your kitchen with interactive quizzes and games.

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## ASK AN EXPERT



For more assistance on safely preparing and handling foods in the home, contact a registered dietitian nutritionist—the food and nutrition expert. A registered dietitian nutritionist can assist you in preparing healthy and flavorful foods, safely, with an individualized eating plan that fits your unique nutritional needs. To locate an RDN in your area, visit [EatRight.org](https://www.EatRight.org).

# Is My Food Safe? App

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Download the [free app](#), the perfect kitchen companion, in the Apple or Android store complete with:



● **IS IT DONE YET?**  
Check the safe internal cooking temperatures for meats and more.

● **TIME TO TOSS?**  
Learn essential information on the shelf life of foods.

● **QUIZ: IS MY KITCHEN SAFE?**  
Test your knowledge of kitchen safety and see what grade your kitchen receives.

