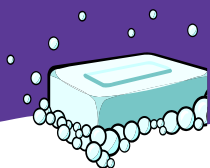


# Practice the Basics of Food Safety to Prevent Foodborne Illness

## Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program



**Help keep kids healthy by keeping foods safe.** Young children are especially at risk for having foodborne illnesses because their bodies and immune systems are still developing. You can help prevent foodborne illness in the children you care for by following these four simple steps to food safety.\*



- **CLEAN:** Wash hands, utensils, and cutting boards with warm water and soap before and after contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.
- **SEPARATE:** Keep raw meat and poultry apart from foods that won't be cooked.
- **COOK:** Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that causes foodborne illness.
- **CHILL:** Use appropriate thermometers (food, oven, refrigerator) to ensure that hot food stays hot, cold food stays cold, and that perishable foods do not remain in the "danger zone" (40 °F to 140 °F).

## CLEAN

Everything that touches food should be clean—starting with your hands.

### Make Handwashing a Habit

- ▶ **Wash your hands with warm water and soap**, scrubbing all parts of the hands for at least 20 seconds before and after preparing, serving, handling, and eating food. When handling food, wash your hands when you switch between tasks, like after handling raw meat and before handling fresh produce or other ready-to-eat foods.
- ▶ **Also wash your hands after going to the bathroom**, changing diapers, coughing, sneezing, touching animals, handling garbage, or tending to someone who is sick or injured. Dry hands with a clean paper towel, and use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open doors.
- ▶ **Assist children with washing their hands before meals** as well as before and after helping with food preparation.



\* *The food safety guidelines contained in this tip sheet are based on recommendations of the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Providers should check with their local health department or sponsoring organization for the specific food safety requirements in the communities they serve.*

more 'clean' tips on next page ...



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### Keep It Clean

- ▶ **Always start preparing food with clean cutting boards, pots, pans, utensils, and counter tops.**
- ▶ **Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water** after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next. This is especially important before and after preparing raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.
- ▶ **Use clean towels or paper towels to wipe kitchen surfaces, counter tops, sinks, and tables.** Dirty towels and sponges often collect and spread bacteria, instead of removing them. **TIP: To kill germs, put damp sponges in the microwave for 1 minute on full power or through a full wash-dry cycle in the dishwasher.**
- ▶ **After washing and drying, you may choose to sanitize the food preparation surfaces** with a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Spray surfaces or immerse cutting boards and utensils with the bleach solution, and let surfaces air dry.
- ▶ **Do not allow books, backpacks, or other items** to be placed on tables or counters where food will be prepared or served.

### Clean and Prepare

- ▶ **Rinse all fresh fruits and vegetables just before peeling, eating, cutting, or cooking.** Under running water, rub produce briskly with your hands and scrub firm-skinned fruits and vegetables with a clean produce brush to remove dirt and germs. Some vegetables like lettuce, celery, and broccoli should be broken apart before rinsing to remove dirt between the different layers.
- ▶ **Before opening cans of food, wash the top of the can under clean running water.** Then, dry the can with a clean cloth or paper towel.
- ▶ **Do not rinse raw fish, seafood, meat, and poultry.** Bacteria in these raw juices can splash and spread to other foods and surfaces. Cooking foods thoroughly will kill harmful bacteria.



## SEPARATE

Separate foods that are ready to eat from those that are raw or that might contain harmful germs. Be sure to separate foods at each step of food handling. Keep fruits and vegetables away from raw meat, poultry, and seafood while buying, storing, or preparing them.

### Purchase and Store

- ▶ **Place raw seafood, meat, and poultry in plastic bags when food shopping.** Separate them from other foods in your grocery cart and bags.
- ▶ **Store raw seafood, meat, and poultry on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator,** so juices don't drip onto other foods.

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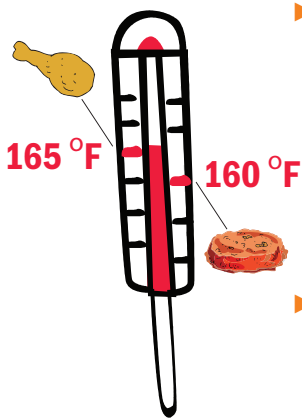
### Prepare and Serve

- ▶ **Use one clean cutting board for fresh produce or ready-to-eat food items and a separate one for raw seafood, meat, and poultry.** Label the cutting boards or use different colored cutting boards so there is no confusion.
- ▶ **Always use a clean plate to serve and eat food.** Never place cooked food on a dirty plate or cutting board that held raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs.



### COOK

- ▶ **Never thaw foods on the kitchen counter or at room temperature.** Defrost foods on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator overnight. Another option is to place food that is either packaged or contained within an air-tight bag or container under cold, running tap water until fully thawed. Only a thin stream of running water is needed. For a quick thaw, use the defrost option on a microwave oven, but only if you are going to cook the meat immediately after it is thawed.



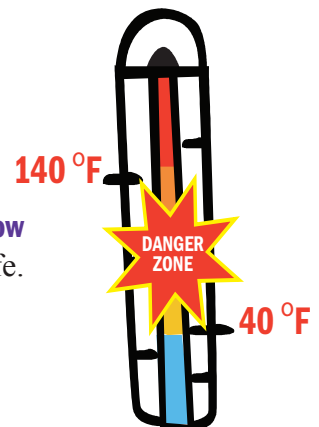
- ▶ **Use a food thermometer to check temperatures to determine when a meat, fish, poultry, or egg dish is fully cooked.** Do not judge whether a food is cooked thoroughly by its color or texture. Cook ground beef, pork, veal, or lamb to 160 °F; egg dishes to 160 °F; and poultry, casseroles, or leftovers to 165 °F. See this chart for more detail on minimum internal temperatures and how long to hold different food at that temperature: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html>
- ▶ **Use a clean food thermometer to measure the internal temperature.** Insert it far enough into the food to get a good reading. Place it in the thickest part of the meat, without touching the bone. [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Kitchen\\_Thermometers/index.asp#4](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Kitchen_Thermometers/index.asp#4)

- ▶ **Cover food, and stir, rotate, and/or flip food periodically to help foods cook evenly in a microwave oven.** Doing so will prevent the food from having “cold spots,” which can hold bacteria. Always follow cooking instructions on food packages, and use microwave-safe cookware.

### CHILL

#### Be Careful in the "Danger Zone"

- ▶ **The “danger zone” is the temperature range 40 °F to 140 °F where bacteria grow most rapidly.** Pay close attention to *time and temperature* to keep foods safe.
- ▶ **Keep hot foods hot (140 °F or above) and cold foods cold (40 °F or below)** in order to minimize the amount of time foods spend in the danger zone.



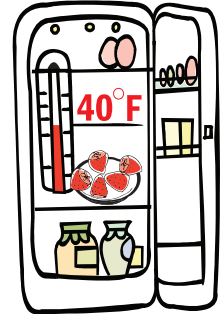
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### Handle Foods Carefully

- ▶ **Keep the refrigerator at 40 °F or below.** Keep the freezer at 0 °F or below. Use thermometers designed for each location and check the temperatures regularly, according to your local health department's recommendations or policies.
- ▶ **Never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator for more than a total of 2 hours.** If the temperature is over 90 °F where the food is out of the refrigerator (such as at a picnic or field trip), food should not be left out more than 1 hour.
- ▶ **Chill perishable foods promptly (these include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers).** Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food, and leftovers as soon as possible but no longer than 2 hours after purchase, preparation, or serving.
- ▶ **Divide large amounts of cooked leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.** Divide large cuts of meat or roasts into smaller pieces before refrigerating.
- ▶ **Reheat *all* leftovers to a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F,** and discard perishable food left out more than 2 hours (or 1 hour during warm weather if the outdoor temperature is above 90 °F).



### Common Food Safety Questions for Child Care Programs

**Q: What should I do if I did not take the meat or poultry out of the freezer before cooking?**

**A: For a quick thaw, defrost food on a plate in the microwave oven.** Another option is to place food that is either packaged or contained within an air-tight bag or container under cold, running tap water until fully thawed. Only a thin stream of running water is needed. Cook immediately after thawing.

**Q: How long can I keep leftovers before freezing or discarding?**

**A: Check with your sponsoring organization or local health department for recommendations or policies.** Even if food does not look or smell bad, discard or freeze leftover foods within 3-4 days.

**Q: I packed lunches for a field trip. How do I keep them safe when traveling?**

**A: Prepare cooked foods such as meats for sandwiches or pasta for salads the day before, so they have time to chill.**

- Freeze sandwiches (remove lettuce and tomato) to keep them cold longer.
- Immediately before leaving, use a cooler to pack food right from the refrigerator. Add enough ice or gel packs to keep food cold, and discard food once the cooling source thaws. Single-serving boxed juice drinks could be partially frozen as a cold source for food, but might not defrost by lunchtime.
- Consider packing beverages in a different cooler—the beverage cooler may be opened more often, so keeping drinks and food separate ensures the food stays cooler longer.
- Tip: In the summer, eat foods shortly after they are prepared.



... more 'questions'

**Q: How do I select safe food and keep it safe from the grocery store to my child care program?**

**A: There are many ways you can choose safe foods and keep them safe until you return to your child care program.**

- In the store, select cold foods last.
- Do not buy foods that are past the “sell by,” “use by,” or any other expiration dates.
- Place meat, poultry, and seafood in plastic bags.
- Separate foods in your shopping cart.



- Keep a cooler in your car to transport perishable foods, and go straight to your child care program.
- Always refrigerate perishable foods within 2 hours, except if the temperature outside is 90 °F or more, which reduces this time to within 1 hour.

**Q: What should I do if I suspect a child in my care has a foodborne illness?**

**A: Follow your State agency or sponsoring organization’s standard policies and procedures for getting medical care for children who become sick for any reason, and follow any State or local policies on preparing for and reporting a suspected foodborne illness.**

- It is important to preserve up to 3 days of samples of all food served to children, as well as the packaging the food came in. This way, it can be determined if food caused the illness and which food it was. Also be sure to note what the symptoms were and when they began.
- For more information on common foodborne illnesses, their symptoms, and causes, go to: <http://fightbac.org/about-foodborne-illness/causes-a-symptoms>.

**Q: How do I get more information about child care involvement in food safety?**

**A: Go to the Additional Resources section on page 97 to find more information on food safety, and ways you can educate and involve children on handling food safely.**

## Activities

### How can I put this information into practice?

Read the following story. Think about whether the four steps to food safety were followed.

Ms. Maria began preparing lunch for the children at ABC Daycare after washing her hands and putting on a hairnet. There is chicken frying in the pan, and some more raw chicken on the cutting board. She is happy the raw chicken defrosted fully overnight after she left the package on the kitchen counter. Ms. Maria decided to make fruit salad. She moved the raw chicken onto a plate and used the same cutting board to slice a honeydew melon in half. She cut it into bite-sized pieces and placed the pieces in a bowl on the counter. She put the other half of the melon on a plate before putting it in the refrigerator. She noticed the refrigerator thermometer read 46 °F.

By this time, the chicken in the pan were nicely browned. Ms. Maria cut a piece of chicken and saw that the inside was no longer pink. “Looks done to me,” she said, and placed the cooked chicken pieces on a tray. With her bare hands, she took the rest of the raw chicken from the plate, rinsed the chicken quickly in the sink, and put the chicken pieces in the warm pan. Then, she walked back to the refrigerator and took out a bag of red grapes. She ate a few grapes, and then put a few handfuls of grapes into the bowl

with the melon. Ms. Maria took a can of peaches from the shelf, used a can opener to open the can, and put the peaches into the bowl of fruit. As she put the can opener back in the drawer, she said, “What a colorful fruit salad!”

Ms. Anna came into the kitchen after playing with the children outside. She put on an apron and stirred the mashed potatoes in the bowl. She pulled the spoon out of the bowl and tasted the mashed potatoes. She said, “This tastes good,” and put the spoon back into the bowl. She called the children in for lunch and served up the chicken, mashed potatoes, and fruit salad, along with a slice of wheat bread and a cup of milk.

After lunch, Ms. Maria wiped down the counters and tables with a damp sponge and wiped her hands on her apron. She used the same sponge to wash the cutting board with cold water. Then, she started to put away the leftovers before she went to the grocery store. Ms. Anna came into the kitchen as she was leaving for the day at 5:30 p.m. and found the fruit salad still sitting on the counter. She put the bowl in the refrigerator to use the next day. She didn’t want to waste any food!

► **Underline the food safety mistakes in the story above.**

► **Write down the correct action steps for each of the mistakes you found.** What could Ms. Maria and Ms. Anna have done differently to be more food safe? (Use another piece of paper if needed.)

1 Ms. Maria should defrost the chicken on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator overnight, or use another food-safe method of thawing frozen foods.

2

3

4



## ----- Activity Answer Key -----

### Answer Key to the Food Safety Tip Sheet Activity

This answer key is for the activity found on the Food Safety tip sheet on page 55. The food safety mistakes are underlined below.

Ms. Maria began preparing lunch for the children at ABC Daycare after washing her hands and putting on a hairnet. There is chicken frying in the pan, and some more raw chicken on the cutting board. She is happy the **(1)** raw chicken defrosted fully overnight after she left the package on the kitchen counter. Ms. Maria decided to make fruit salad. She moved the raw chicken onto a plate and **(2, 3, 4)** used the same cutting board to slice a honeydew melon in half. She cut it into bite-sized pieces and placed the pieces in a bowl on the counter. She **(5)** put the other half of the melon on a plate before putting it in the refrigerator. She noticed the **(6)** refrigerator thermometer read 46 °F.

By this time, the chicken in the pan were nicely browned. Ms. Maria **(7)** cut a piece of chicken and saw that the inside was no longer pink. “Looks done to me,” she said, and placed the cooked chicken pieces on a tray. **(8)** With her bare hands, she took the rest of the raw chicken from the plate, **(9)** rinsed the chicken quickly in the sink, and put the chicken pieces in the warm pan. Then, she walked back to the refrigerator and took out a bag of red grapes. **(10, 11)** She ate a few grapes, and then put a few handfuls of grapes into the bowl with the melon. Ms. Maria **(12, 13)** took a can of peaches from the shelf, used a can opener to open the can, and put the peaches into the bowl of fruit. As she **(14)** put the can opener back in the drawer, she said, “What a colorful fruit salad!”

Ms. Anna came into the kitchen after playing with the children outside. **(15)** She put on an apron and stirred the mashed potatoes in the bowl. She pulled the spoon out of the bowl and tasted the mashed potatoes. She said, “This tastes good,” and **(16, 17)** put the spoon back into the bowl. She **(18, 19)** called the children in for lunch and served up the chicken, mashed potatoes, and fruit salad, along with a slice of wheat bread and a cup of milk.

After lunch, Ms. Maria **(20)** wiped down the counters and tables with a damp sponge and **(21)** wiped her hands on her apron. She **(22)** used the same sponge to **(23)** wash the cutting board with cold water. Then, she started to put away the leftovers before she went to the grocery store. Ms. Anna came into the kitchen as she was leaving for the day at **(24)** 5:30 p.m. and found the fruit salad still sitting on the counter. She put the bowl in the refrigerator to use the next day. She didn’t want to waste any food!

Answers →



**The correct action step for each mistake is written below. Review the appropriate section of the Food Safety tip sheet on pages 55-59 for more detail on the answer.**

- 1** Ms. Maria should defrost the chicken on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator overnight, or use another food-safe method of thawing frozen foods. **(Chill)**
- 2** Ms. Maria and Ms. Anna should always prepare food with clean cutting boards, utensils, plates, trays, and counter tops. **(Clean)**
- 3** Ms. Maria should use separate cutting boards and knives when handling raw chicken and fruits. Use one clean cutting board and knife for the raw chicken, and a separate cutting board and knife to cut the melon. **(Separate)**
- 4** Ms. Maria should rinse the honeydew melon before cutting it. **(Clean)**
- 5** The cut half of the honeydew melon should be covered before placing it in the refrigerator. **(Chill)**
- 6** The refrigerator temperature should be below 41° F. **(Chill)**
- 7** Ms. Maria should properly insert a clean food thermometer into the chicken to check that the internal temperature has reached 165 °F. **(Cook)**
- 8** Ms. Maria should wash her hands when switching between tasks, like after handling raw chicken and before touching the bag of grapes. **(Clean)**
- 9** Ms. Maria should put the chicken directly in the pan to cook it to the proper internal temperature. **(Clean)**
- 10** Ms. Maria should wash her hands after eating the grapes and before preparing the fruit salad. **(Clean)**
- 11** Ms. Maria should wash the grapes. **(Clean)**
- 12** Ms. Maria should wash and dry the top of the can of peaches before opening it. **(Clean)**
- 13** See answer for **#2**.
- 14** Ms. Maria should wash the can opener after using it. **(Clean)**
- 15** Ms. Anna should wash her hands after playing with the children, before coming into the kitchen to prepare food, and before serving food to the children. It is recommended that Ms. Anna wear a hair restraint (like a hat or hairnet) to keep her hair from falling into food, equipment, and utensils. **(Clean)**
- 16** Ms. Anna should use a separate, clean spoon to taste the mashed potatoes. The same spoon that is being used to mix the mashed potatoes should not be used for tasting. **(Clean and Separate)**
- 17** See answer for **#2**.
- 18** Ms. Maria and Ms. Anna should assist children with washing their hands before they sit down for lunch. **(Clean)**
- 19** See answer for **#15**.
- 20** The same sponge used to wipe countertops should not be used to wash the cutting board or dishes. Instead of using a sponge, Ms. Maria could use clean towels or single-use paper towels to wipe the counters and tables. If using a sponge to clean, sanitize it between uses to kill germs. Sponges should be sanitized often. **(Clean)**
- 21** Ms. Maria should wash her hands instead of wiping them on her apron. **(Clean)**
- 22** See answer for **#20**.
- 23** The cutting board should be washed in hot, soapy water, instead of in cold water. **(Clean)**
- 24** Ms. Anna should throw away the fruit salad. The fruit salad should have been put in the refrigerator promptly after lunch, or within 2 hours of preparation. **(Chill)**

**Circle any food safety mistakes that you may have missed above. Not sure why it was a mistake? Go back to the section of the food safety tip referenced at the end of the mistake.**