

Immunology

Food safety advice for people who are at an increased risk of infection

It is especially important to follow food safety guidelines when your immune system is weakened. Germs and toxins (which are poisons made by the germs) can be passed to you by food that has been incorrectly stored, handled and cooked. This could result in food poisoning.

Food poisoning symptoms include fever, cramps and headaches as well as nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. You should seek medical attention if you suspect you have food poisoning.

A primary reason for cooking food is to destroy germs. Those with weakened immune systems should be aware of their increased risk from raw or insufficiently cooked foods.

Shopping

- Buy food as fresh as possible.
- Check any 'best before dates'.
- Keep the food cool if you are not going straight home.
- Carry a cool box and use it for perishable items. Do not put food directly into a hot car.
- If you intend freezing any items such as meat or fish, do so as soon as possible. Don't store it for a couple of days before freezing it.

Storage

Buy a special food storage thermometer from a supermarket or freezer store. **Use** it to check the temperature of your fridge and freezer at least once a **week**.

- Your fridge should be between 2°C and 4°C.
- Your freezer should be at or below 18°C.
- Raw meats and fish should be stored on a lower shelf than cooked foods. This will avoid drips contaminating food that is ready to eat.
- Cook meat or fish within two days or freeze it on the day of purchase.
- Store eggs in the main part of the fridge because this is at a lower temperature than the door racks.
- If you don't use much cooking oil keeping it in the fridge may stop it going rancid.
- Keep your fridge clean.
- Make sure you **wash your hands** before preparing food.

- Keep your kitchen as clean as possible.
- Use an anti-bacterial cleaner for surfaces and equipment.
- If any part of a piece of food has gone mouldy throw out the entire piece. Toxins can travel into the 'good' parts and poison them as well.
- Marinate food in the fridge and not at room temperature.
- Chopping boards are particularly dangerous as bugs or germs can hide in scratches and cracks. Use plastic boards and change them regularly.
- Keep one board for raw meat and fish and another for fruit and vegetables.
- Immediately after handling raw meat or fish **wash your hands** and any knives or chopping boards in **hot** water.
- Use a hand towel to dry your hands, not the tea towel.
- Wash fruit, salad and vegetables before eating.
- Keep pets away from food and work surfaces.

Cooking

- Shellfish and steamed fish **must** be cooked for at least seven minutes.
- Meat should be too hot to touch. If you enjoy roast meat it would be worth buying a meat thermometer to make sure that the centre of a joint reaches between 70°C and 85°C.
- Cook eggs thoroughly and make sure both the white and the yolk are **hard**.
- Cook boiled or fried rice according to the instructions and eat it immediately.
- **Barbecued food** is a common source of food poisoning.
- Make sure everything is well cooked in the middle.
- Do **not** mix raw and cooked meats on the same plate

Leftovers

- Allow food to cool, wrap well and store in the fridge.
- Plastic boxes with well fitting lids are ideal for storage, or otherwise use foil or clingfilm.
- Do **not** store cooked rice to reheat.
- Eat leftovers within two days.
- Reheat the food thoroughly. It should be **at least** 70°C in the middle.
- Remember microwaved food is hotter at the edges!
- Do not reheat cooked food more than once.

Other facts you should know

- Beware of shellfish unless it has been steamed for **at least** seven minutes. (Most restaurants only cook shellfish for two to three minutes; this is not long enough to kill any germs they may contain).
- Avoid sushi dishes with raw fish.
- Do not eat dairy products containing **raw** (**unpasteurised**) milk. Check the label or **ask**.

- Be especially careful to check labels of soft ripened cheeses, for example, Brie and Camembert, also some cheeses made from goats' milk.
- Blue cheeses should be avoided. All cheese is safe when well cooked.
- Meat pastes and pâtés are best avoided unless well cooked and freshly prepared.
- Avoid cold rice served in salad dishes.
- Keep clear of foods with raw or lightly cooked eggs such as home-made mayonnaise, Caesar salad dressing or Hollandaise sauce, tiramisu, 'luxury' ice creams and mousses.
- If any of your favourite dishes are listed then consider alternatives. For example: most mayonnaise purchased in jars will be made from pasteurised eggs.
- Avoid grubby places!
- Ask for your meat, fish or poultry to be well cooked or medium well done.
- When your food arrives check that it is well cooked and hot. You are the customer!
- Make sure that all foods which are supposed to be cold are chilled and not at room temperature.
- Be careful about selecting food from salad bars. Check that the food is cool and fresh.
- Food containing lightly cooked eggs can be tricky. Ask if the restaurant uses pasteurised eggs.

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Potete chiedere di ottenere queste informazioni in altre lingue, in stampato grande o in audiocassetta.

Italian

若你需要本信息的繁體中文、大字體或音訊格式的版本，請要求索取。

Cantonese

तमने आ माळिती बीछ भाषाओमां, मोटा अक्षरोमां अथवा सांभजी शकाय जेवा माध्यम (ओडीओ डोमेन्ट)मां जेठती छोय तो कृपा करीने पूछो.

Gujarati

تکایہ پرسیار بگہ تہ گہر نہ و زانیاریہ ت دہوی بہ زمانیکی تر ، بہ پیتی گہورہ یانیش بہ شیوہی دہنگ

Kurdish

آگر آپ کو یہ معلومات دوسری زبانوں میں، بڑے الفاظ کی اشاعت میں یا آڈیو ٹیپ پر درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی اس کیلئے درخواست کریں۔

Urdu



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Document History

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