

FOOD SAFETY STEPS DURING CANCER TREATMENT

Food safety is especially important during active cancer treatment.

Following food safety steps will lower your chance of foodborne infection, also called food poisoning. The four basics of food safety are clean, separate, cook, and chill. See below for a summary of each of these steps. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/ and www.foodsafety.gov

CLEAN – WASH HANDS AND SURFACES OFTEN

- Wash hands in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food, and before eating
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, pots, can openers, blenders, and utensils with hot soapy water and rinse with hot water. Let them air dry. Do not use dish towels to dry them. If dishwasher-safe, you can run them through the dishwasher
- Clean countertops and cutting boards in between working with raw meat, poultry, and seafood and with foods that will not be cooked
- You may use a weak bleach solution (1 tablespoon of bleach in 1 gallon of water) to sanitize cutting boards. You can use this bleach solution or disinfectant wipes to sanitize countertops
- Wash dish towels often in the hot cycle of your washing machine
- Wash all fruits and vegetables under running water, even those you're going to peel or cut
- With canned goods, clean the lids before opening



SEPARATE – DON'T SPREAD BACTERIA FROM ONE FOOD TO ANOTHER






- Handle raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs with care
- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from other foods in your shopping cart, grocery bags, and refrigerator
- Wrap raw meat, poultry, and seafood to keep juices from getting onto other food
- Use different cutting boards for meats, seafood, and produce

COOK – COOK FOODS TO SAFE TEMPERATURES

- Cook foods to safe minimum internal temperatures
- Reheat leftovers to 165° F internal temperature
- Use a food thermometer to check that your cooked or reheated food has reached its safe temperature
- Place the thermometer into the thickest part of the food when you check. Wash the thermometer in hot soapy water after each use, or clean as directed by the manufacturer
- When cooking in a microwave, cover food, stir, and rotate for even cooking (by hand or with your microwave turntable)

You can't tell by looking. Use a food thermometer to be sure

USDA Recommended Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures

145°F	145°F	160°F	160°F	165°F
<small>with a 3-minute rest time</small> 				
<i>beef, pork, veal & lamb steaks, roasts & chops</i>	<i>fish</i>	<i>beef, pork, veal & lamb ground</i>	<i>egg dishes</i>	<i>turkey, chicken & duck whole, pieces & ground</i>

CHILL – COLD TEMPERATURES SLOW THE GROWTH OF HARMFUL BACTERIA

- Use an appliance thermometer to be sure the temperature of your freezer is 0° F or below, and refrigerator is 40° F or below
- Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, and ground meats within 2 days, and other meats within 3 to 5 days after you buy them
- Chill all leftovers in the refrigerator within 2 hours (or within 1 hour if room temperature is higher than 90° F) and use them within 2 days. Do not eat them if they are in the refrigerator more than 2 days
- Do not thaw food at room temperature. Instead, thaw in the microwave and cook immediately, or thaw in the refrigerator

TIPS FOR GROCERY SHOPPING

- Clean your shopping cart using disinfecting wipes if available
- Put raw packaged meat, poultry, and seafood into plastic bags before placing them in your shopping cart
- Do not buy food past its “sell by” date
- Do not buy higher risk foods from chart on the next page
- Do not buy food that is shown in unsafe or unclean conditions
- Do not buy produce that is bruised or damaged
- Do not buy cans with dents, cracks, rust, or a lid that is bulging
- Pick up perishable foods last
- Plan to go directly home from the grocery store and refrigerate items promptly

TIPS FOR EATING OUT

- If you eat out, choose a restaurant with a good food safety inspection score (look for a score of 90 or above, or an ‘A’). Check the general condition of the restaurant (how clean the restaurant looks may reflect how safely the food is prepared)
- Avoid buffets, salad bars, food trucks, juice bars, and potlucks
- Choose lower risk foods from the chart on the next page
- Ask whether the food contains uncooked ingredients such as eggs, sprouts, meat, poultry, or seafood. If so, choose something else
- Ask how foods have been cooked
- Avoid lukewarm food. Cold food should be served cold, and hot food should be served hot
- Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours (or within 1 hour if room temperature is higher than 90° F)

FOOD SAFETY STEPS

DURING CANCER TREATMENT

Some foods are more risky for you than others. This risk can depend on where the food is from, and how it is processed, stored, and prepared. Do not eat food that is expired, damaged, or visibly moldy. See the chart below for higher risk foods to avoid, and lower risk foods to choose instead.

Type of Food	Higher risk foods to avoid	Foods to choose instead
Meat & meat substitutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, or tofu Hot dogs, lunch meats, and deli meats that have not been reheated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meat or poultry cooked to safe minimum internal temperature Pasteurized or cooked tofu Hot dogs, lunch meats, and deli meats reheated to steaming hot or 165° F
Seafood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raw or undercooked fish or shellfish, including sashimi, sushi, lox, and ceviche Refrigerated smoked fish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish or shellfish cooked to safe minimum internal temperature Canned fish or shellfish
Cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soft cheeses made from raw or unpasteurized milk, which can include blue-veined, brie, burrata, feta, camembert, Mexican-style cheeses (queso fresco, queso blanco, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard and processed cheeses Cream cheese Soft cheeses clearly labeled “made from pasteurized milk”
Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unpasteurized or raw milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pasteurized milk
Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raw or undercooked eggs, including runny, over-easy, poached, soft-boiled, sunny-side-up Foods containing raw or undercooked eggs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homemade Caesar salad dressing Raw cookie dough Homemade egg nog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eggs cooked until yolks and whites are firm Pasteurized eggs or egg products Store-bought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelf-stable Caesar salad dressing Packaged cookie dough Ultra-pasteurized egg nog
Fruits and vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unwashed fruits or vegetables Fresh salsas in refrigerated section of grocery store Unpasteurized fruit and vegetable juices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruits and vegetables rinsed well under running water Cooked, canned, and frozen fruits and vegetables Shelf-stable salsas (sold in a jar or can) Pasteurized fruit and vegetable juices
Sprouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raw sprouts (alfalfa, bean, or other sprouts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooked sprouts
Nuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raw nuts Fresh nut butters ground in store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roasted nuts Commercially packaged nut butters
Honey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raw honey or honeycomb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial, grade A honey
Leftovers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leftovers not reheated to 165° F Leftovers older than 2 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leftovers reheated to 165° F Leftovers eaten within 2 days
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well water from private or small community wells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tap water Commercial bottled water Water from municipal wells

For more questions, please ask your treatment team for a referral to a registered dietitian.