

# Fall Food Safety

Cooperative Extension • Delaware State University

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## Clean

Wash hands and surfaces often

*Fall brings a return to school, football and home cooked soups and stews. Slow cookers, or crock pots, usually reappear on kitchen counters to simmer some palate-pleasing brew.*

**CLEAN** You can't see or smell harmful bacteria. It's all over your kitchen and on your hands! It's on your countertop, in your sink and raw foods. Bacteria can also be present on equipment and even in the air. Left unchecked, these germs can get into the food you eat and make you sick. Fight bac! Keep your hands and your work surfaces clean to minimize foodborne illness.

**SEPARATE** To avoid cross contaminating your food, wash your hands with soap and hot water before and after handling raw meats, like ground beef, to make sure you don't spread bacteria. Don't re-use any packaging materials from raw foods. If you wash raw meat before cooking, be careful to clean work surfaces from any juices that may spill. Use soap and hot water to wash utensils and surfaces which have come into contact with the raw meat before using them to prepare other food. To sanitize surfaces, dissolve 1 teaspoon of bleach in 1 quart of water and use clean dishcloths or sponges. Dirty cloths and sponges also carry harmful bacteria!

When serving food, always use clean plates. Clean thoroughly dishes that previously held raw meat before using them for cooked foods. Ever wonder why buffet-style restaurants provide you with clean plates for that second, or third, trip through the food line? Clean plates lessen the likelihood of cross contamination by guests taking back bacteria-filled dishes.

**CHILL** Refrigerate perishable foods quickly and keep them cold until preparation time. Cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria and reduce the risk of foodborne illness. If you cut up meat and vegetables before cooking, store them separately in the refrigerator to keep bacteria at bay. Always marinate food in the refrigerator.

Never leave raw or cooked foods, or cut fruits and vegetables out for more than two hours before putting them away. Food can be safely defrosted in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave. Food thawed in either water or in the microwave should be cooked immediately.



## Separate

Don't cross contaminate



## Chill

Refrigerate promptly

————— Don't fall for foodborne illness! —————

## COOK Slow and steady...

If you plan to cook using the slow and steady approach, here are some hot topics for using crock pots:

- Use a clean cooker and utensils, and a clean work area. Wash hands before and during food preparation.
- Always defrost meat or poultry before putting it into a slow cooker. Choose to make foods with a high moisture content such as chili, soup, stew or spaghetti sauce.
- Cut food into small chunks so they will cook thoroughly. Do not use the slow cooker for roasts or whole chickens because the food will cook so

slowly it could remain in the bacterial "danger zone" too long.

- If possible, turn the cooker on the highest setting for the first hour of cooking time and then to low or the setting called for in your recipe. However, it's safe to cook foods on low the entire time -- if you're leaving for work, for example, and preparation time is limited.
- While food is cooking and once it's done, food will stay safe as long as the cooker is operating.

The slow cooker may take several hours to reach a safe, bacteria killing temperature.



## Cook

To proper temperatures

Well Done! Here's your guide to safe internal temperatures for:

|   | FOOD   | °F  | Rest Time* |
|---|--|-----|------------|
| Ground Meat & Meat Mixtures   | Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb   | 160 | None       |
|   | Turkey, Chicken  | 165 | None       |
| Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb  | Steaks, Roasts, Chops  | 145 | 3 minutes  |
|   | Medium Rare  | 145 |            |
|   | Medium   | 160 |            |
|   | Well Done  | 170 |            |
| Poultry   | Chicken & Turkey, whole  | 165 | None       |
|   | Poultry breasts, roasts  | 165 | None       |
|   | Poultry thighs, legs, wings  | 165 | None       |
|   | Duck & Goose   | 165 | None       |
|   | Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)                                   | 165 |            |
| Pork & Ham  | Fresh Pork   | 145 | 3 minutes  |
|   | Fresh Ham (raw)  | 145 | 3 minutes  |
|   | Pre-cooked ham (to reheat)   | 140 | None       |
| Eggs  | Eggs (cook until yolk & white are both firm)                         |     | None       |
|   | Egg dishes   | 160 | None       |
| Leftovers & Casseroles  | Leftovers & casseroles   | 165 | None       |
| Seafood   | Fin Fish (cook until flesh is opaque & separates easily with a fork) | 145 | None       |
|   | Shrimp, Lobster & Crabs (Cook until flesh is pearly & opaque)        |     | None       |
|   | Clams, Oysters & Mussels (cook until shells open during cooking)     |     | None       |
|   | Scallops (Cook until flesh is milky white or opaque & firm)          |     | None       |
| *Allowing meat to rest after cooking allows constant/higher temps to destroy harmful germs. |  |     |            |
| Source: Foodsafety.gov  |  |     |            |

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