

Food Safety

Everyone
has an important role



Division of Food Safety

Florida Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services
CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner

From Farm to Table

Everyone plays a role to help assure that the food we eat is safe and wholesome:

- ❖ **Growers, packers and distributors**
- ❖ **Wholesale food establishments**
- ❖ **Retail Food Establishments**
- ❖ **Regulatory and inspection agencies**
- ❖ **Consumers**
- ❖ **Food Processors**

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Department of Agriculture, and other government agencies work hard to protect our food supply. Food safety is a big part of the job, but it is everyone's responsibility. Food producers, processors, retail sellers, and individual consumers like you also have an important part to play. The greatest threats to food safety – bacteria and viruses – are the hazards over which you as a consumer have the greatest control. Do your part. Learn more about your share of the responsibility for keeping your food supply safe.





As a consumer, what can I do to protect my family and myself?

- Never buy cracked eggs, or any damaged food. Pick up frozen and perishable foods last and store them in your refrigerator and freeze at home as soon as possible.
- Keep food out of the DANGER ZONE. This means hot foods should be kept at 140° F or above and cold foods at 41° F or below.
- Don't buy foods in dented, rusty, bulging, or leaky cans, or in cracked jars or jars with loose or bulging lids. If you have such items at home, throw them out.
- Use good sense. Don't let cooked or refrigerated foods, such as salads, remain at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Keep food free from micro-organisms that cause food poisoning by keeping the food, the preparation equipment, and yourself clean.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before and after preparing foods, handling different foods (for example, if you just handled raw chicken, wash your hands before preparing a salad) and after using the bathroom.
- Don't sneeze or cough on food.
- Thoroughly rinse fruits and vegetables with water before eating or preparing.
- Organisms can "travel" from raw to cooked food, so never let raw food touch cooked food.
- Wash utensils, including the cutting board, with soap and warm water and rinse again in a sanitizing solution such as bleach between each preparation step.
- Cook food hot enough to sizzle. High food temperatures (165° F to 212° F) reached by boiling, baking, frying, and roasting kill most organisms that cause foodborne illness.

- Cook foods thoroughly to a high enough temperature to kill organisms.
- Never eat raw or undercooked eggs; they might contain harmful organisms.
- When cooking in the microwave, stir the food, turn the dish several times. and follow directions on rest time. Once cooked, keep hot foods hot at 140° F or above until served.
- Be suspicious. If you notice mold, cut off a large section of the food around the mold and throw it out.
- If you're not absolutely certain about a food throw it out!



What are the leading risk factors that contribute to foodborne illness?

- ❖ **Improper cooling of foods**
- ❖ **Too much time between preparing and serving**
- ❖ **Infected persons touching food**
- ❖ **Not cooking food properly**
- ❖ **Not keeping hot foods hot**
- ❖ **Improper reheating of foods**
- ❖ **Contaminated raw foods**
- ❖ **Cross contaminating raw and cooked foods**

The cost of foodborne illness to the nation, based on direct medical expenses, lost wages, and productivity, and industry loss of tainted food products, is estimated at \$1 billion to \$10 billion annually. Keep foodborne illness out of your family.

Persons at high risk for foodborne disease are:



- ❖ Infants and very young children
- ❖ The elderly
- ❖ Pregnant women
- ❖ Individuals with weakened immune systems due to illness such as diabetes, HIV, AIDS, kidney, liver disease or cancer.

Ask your doctor if you or a family member falls into a "high risk" category. If so, your doctor may recommend avoiding certain foods.



If you become ill and suspect you may have a foodborne illness, what should you do?

- ❖ See your doctor and report your illness to the county health department.
- ❖ If you suspect you became ill from food purchased at a supermarket, grocery or convenience store, contact the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at (850) 488-3951.
- ❖ If you suspect you became ill from food consumed at a restaurant, contact the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation at (850) 488-9263.



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hat can you do as a consumer, if you have a question or food safety concern about a food product you have purchased?

Become educated

Use the many resources available to you:

**Florida Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services.
1-800-HELP FLA • 1-850-488-3952
www.doacs.state.fl.us**

**United States Food and Drug Administration
888-463-6332 • www.cfsan.fda.gov**

**Food Safety and Inspection Service
United States Department of Agriculture
1-800-535-4555 • www.fsis.usda.gov**

Your County Cooperative Extension Office.

The merchant from whom you bought the product. Merchants are knowledgeable and want you to continue shopping with them.