

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 minus18°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.
- Marinade 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.



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Polish

Jeżeli chciałbyś uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, w dużej czcionce lub w formacie audio, poproś pracownika oddziału o kontakt z biurem Informacji Pacjenta (Patient Information) pod numerem telefonu: 01223 216032 lub pod adresem patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Portuguese

Se precisar desta informação noutra língua, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio, por favor peça ao departamento que contacte a secção de Informação aos Doentes (Patient Information) pelo telefone 01223 216032 ou através do e-mail patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Arabic

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Cantonese

如您需以另一語言版本、特大字體或錄音形式索取本資料，請要求部門聯絡病人諮詢服務：電話 01223 216032，電郵地址 patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Turkish

Eğer bu bilgileri başka bir dilde veya büyük baskılı veya sesli olarak isterseniz, lütfen bulunduğunuz bölümdeki görevlilere söyleyin Hasta Bilgilendirme servisini arasinlar: 01223 216032 veya patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Urdu

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Bengali

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