



## Keep food safe



Oklahoma Cooperative  
Extension Service

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**F**ood safety is an important part of keeping your family healthy. Follow these four food safety rules to help fight invisible bacteria.

1. **Clean** – Wash hands and food surfaces often.
2. **Separate** – Keep raw and cooked foods separate.
3. **Cook** – Cook foods to a safe temperature.
4. **Chill** – Refrigerate perishable food quickly.

### Be clean

Bacteria are invisible. They can spread everywhere in the kitchen. Make proper hand washing a family habit before eating. Wash kitchen utensils, cutting boards, sponges and surfaces with hot, soapy water each time they are used.

Bacteria also can hide in dish towels, dishcloths and sponges. Wash them often in the hot cycle of your washing machine. If you are not able to wash kitchen cloths and sponges frequently, consider using paper towels.



### Keep raw and cooked foods separate

Keep raw meat, poultry and fish in closed containers or plastic bags so the juices won't drip. Wash everything (including your hands) that touches raw meat, poultry or fish. Never put cooked food on the same plate or cutting board that held raw food – unless you wash it first. Store raw meat on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator.

### Cook foods to safe temperature

Cook eggs until yolks and whites are firm. Cook fish until it's not shiny and it flakes easily with a fork. Cook ground meats until the inside reaches 160 F and chicken to 165 F. Reheat leftovers to at least 165 F.



Be sure microwaved food has no cold spots. Turning (by hand or turntable) and stirring the food occasionally while microwaving will help prevent cold spots.

### Refrigerate perishable food quickly

Put groceries away soon after returning from the grocery store. Freeze or refrigerate leftovers and other cooked foods within two hours of cooking. Put leftovers in small, shallow containers to cool faster.

Be sure cold foods stay cold. Make certain the refrigerator door closes after it is opened. When grocery shopping on hot days, place cold foods into a small ice chest to take them home. Check the temperature of refrigerators and freezers. Refrigerators should be between 40 and 33 F. Freezers should be below zero. Thaw frozen food on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator or microwave oven, not on the counter.



### A word about fruits and vegetables

Eating fresh fruits and vegetables is good for your family's health. Germs and bacteria can hide on the outside surfaces. To help keep fruits and vegetables safe to eat, do not purchase pieces that have cuts or soft spots. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water before eating, slicing or cooking. You do not need to use detergent or bleach. In the refrigerator, remember to store fruits and vegetables on a shelf above raw meat.

### Hand washing

Even if your hands look clean, they probably carry germs. Germs are everywhere. Washing your hands with warm, soapy water for 30 seconds can get rid of germs.

## Try This!

Show your child why good hand washing takes three things: 1) warm water, 2) soap and 3) rubbing your hands for 30 seconds (sing the Alphabet song).

1. Mix small amount vegetable oil with small amount of cinnamon in a bowl.
2. Let your child rub “cinnamon oil” on his or her hands.
3. Wash hands together in four ways to remove the cinnamon:
  - a. Use cold water only.
  - b. Use cold water and soap for 10 seconds.
  - c. Use warm water and soap for 10 seconds.
  - d. Use warm water and soap for 30 seconds.  
Rub your hands well! And remember to sing the Alphabet Song!
4. Talk about it. Cinnamon isn't harmful but germs are. You can see the cinnamon if you don't wash your hands for 30 seconds using warm water and soap. Germs are invisible and you won't see them, so you must wash your hands correctly.

**Reviewed by: Jenni Kinsey, MS, RD, LD & Hasina Rakotomanana, MS.**

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