

# Senior Bytes

HEALTH & NUTRITION PROGRAM, SNAP EDUCATION



## Ten Steps to a Safe Kitchen

November 2015



**Step One:** Keep your refrigerator at 40° F (4° C) or less. A temperature of 40°F or less is important because it slows the growth of most bacteria.

**Step Two:** Refrigerate cooked, perishable food as soon as possible within two hours after cooking to slow the growth of bacteria; one hour in hot weather. Date leftovers so they can be used within two to three days. If in doubt, throw it out!

**Step Three:** Change out your dishcloth daily and replace sponges frequently. Wash your kitchen dishcloths in the washing machine in hot soapy water. Sponges can be washed in the dishwasher. Many cooks use dishcloths or sponges to mop up areas where they have worked with uncooked meat and then reuse the cloth or sponge in other kitchen areas after minimal rinsing. A contaminated dishcloth can house millions of bacteria after a few hours. Consider using paper towels to clean up after raw meat and then throw them away immediately.

**Step Four:** Wash your cutting board with soap and hot water after each use. Never allow raw meat, poultry, and fish to come in contact with other foods. Washing with only a damp cloth will not remove bacteria. Periodically washing in a bleach solution of one tsp bleach to one quart water is the best way to prevent bacteria from remaining on your cutting board.



**Step Five:** Cook ground beef, red meats and poultry products to a safe internal temperature. Use a meat thermometer. Cook ground meat patties, to an internal temperature of at least 160°F, pork and beef to 145°F and poultry to 165°F. The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service advises consumers to use a meat thermometer when cooking hamburger and not rely on the internal color of the meat to be sure it is safe to eat.

**Step Six:** Don't eat raw or lightly cooked eggs. Many older cookbooks have recipes for ice cream, mayonnaise, eggnog and some desserts that call for raw eggs. These recipes are not recommended unless you use pasteurized eggs found in the dairy section due of the risk of Salmonella. The commercial versions of these products are made with pasteurized eggs (eggs that have been sufficiently heated to kill bacteria) and are not a food hazard. Remember—this means no sampling of cake batters and cookie dough before they are baked!

**Step Seven:** Clean kitchen counters and other surfaces that come in contact with food with hot water and detergent & sanitize with a solution of one teaspoon bleach and one quart water. Hot water and detergent do a good job, too, but may not kill all strains of bacteria. In place of the bleach solution, you can purchase unscented prepared cleaning sprays or wipes that can be used on food contact surfaces.

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**Step Eight:** When washing dishes by hand, allow dishes and utensils to air-dry in order to eliminate re-contamination from hands or towels.

**Step Nine:** Wash hands with soap and warm water immediately after handling raw meat, poultry, or fish. Wash for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food, especially raw meat.



**Step Ten:** Defrost meat, poultry and fish products in the refrigerator, microwave oven, or cold water that is changed every 30 minutes. Follow package directions for thawing foods in the microwave. Cook microwave defrosted food immediately after thawing.

Source: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach; <http://z.umn.edu/106f>

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This resource was funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program -- SNAP.



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