

# Four steps to prevent food-borne illness



## 1 Chill

**Avoid the DANGER ZONE. Germs grow quickly at temperatures between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F).**

- Germs grow quickly at room temperature. Put food that is likely to rot or spoil in the refrigerator or freezer within 1-2 hours of purchase.
- Keep cold foods cold. Set your refrigerator to 4°C (40°F) and your freezer to -18°C (0°F).
- Never thaw food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, in the microwave, or in cold water (replaced every 30 minutes). Food thawed in the microwave should be cooked immediately.
- Serve food right away, and refrigerate or freeze perishable food, prepared food (like take out) and leftovers within two hours. Avoid letting food sit at room temperatures between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F).



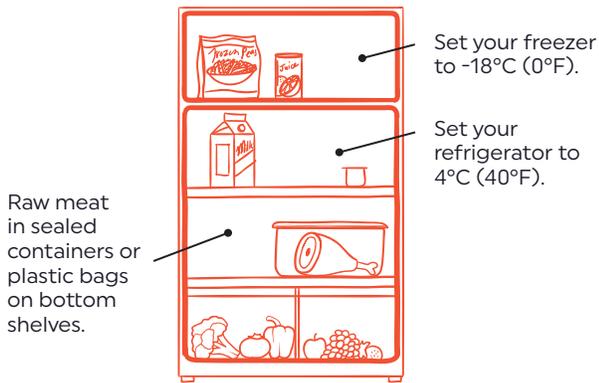
## 2 Clean

**Germs can spread throughout the kitchen. Frequent cleaning can prevent this from happening.**

- Always wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food, using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets.
- Clean and sanitize counter tops, cutting boards, and utensils with warm water and soap, before and after food preparation. A mild bleach and water solution (1 tsp unscented household bleach to 3 cups of water), can be used for sanitizing.
- Wash dishcloths daily to avoid the spread of germs. Avoid using sponges, as they are harder to keep clean.
- All fresh fruits and vegetables need to be washed before preparing or serving. Gently rub fruits and vegetables under running water.



## How to store food in the refrigerator



## 3 Separate

**Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and their juices separate from foods that won't be cooked.**

- Do not allow raw meat, poultry, and seafood or their juices to touch other food in your grocery cart, shopping bags or refrigerator. This same rule applies when preparing and serving food.
- Store raw meats in sealed containers or plastic bags on bottom shelves in your refrigerator to keep their juices from dripping onto other foods.
- Never place cooked food on an unwashed plate that has previously held raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs.
- Use one cutting board for produce, and a separate one for raw meat, poultry and seafood.

## 4 Cook

**Harmful germs can live on some foods if they aren't cooked properly.**

- Store bought meat and poultry, egg dishes, casseroles, and leftovers should always be cooked so that the internal temperature is high enough to kill germs.
- Use a meat thermometer and the safe internal cooking temperature chart (below) to tell when these foods are cooked enough to kill germs.
- Cook ground meat thoroughly. Colour is not a reliable indication that the meat is cooked.
- Keep hot food at or above  $60^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $140^{\circ}\text{F}$ ).
- Bring sauces, soups and gravies to a boil when reheating.



### Safe internal temperature chart

#### **Beef & Lamb**

Ground:  $71^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $160^{\circ}\text{F}$ )  
Steaks & Roasts:  $63^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $145^{\circ}\text{F}$ )

#### **Chicken & Turkey**

$82^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $180^{\circ}\text{F}$ )

#### **Pork**

$71^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $160^{\circ}\text{F}$ )

#### **Fish & Shellfish**

$74^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $165^{\circ}\text{F}$ )

#### **Leftovers and Casseroles**

$74^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $165^{\circ}\text{F}$ )



Poor food handling practices at home are more common than most people think. Follow these safety tips when preparing food to help protect you and your family from food-borne illnesses. For more information, please contact your regional Environmental Health Officer.

[www.gov.nu.ca/environmental-health](http://www.gov.nu.ca/environmental-health)