

*World Health Organization's first ever estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases show almost 1 in 10 people fall ill every year from eating contaminated food and 420,000 die as a result. Children under 5 years of age are at particularly high risk, with 125,000 children dying from foodborne diseases every year.*

Today's bacteria are more virulent and harder to control than past years. Due to antibiotic overuse in the animal population, coupled with resistance to pesticides, it is more difficult to keep our food sources healthy and us safe. The liberal use of hand sanitizers, instead of soap and water, has affected our ability to temper food poisoning. Food poisoning is on the rise and holds higher consequences for the young, the old, those with immune disorder and those who suffer from a chronic illness such as diabetes. The bacteria, parasites and viruses grow in the "temperature danger zone" over 40 degrees F (4.5 Celsius) or below 140 degrees F (60 Celsius).

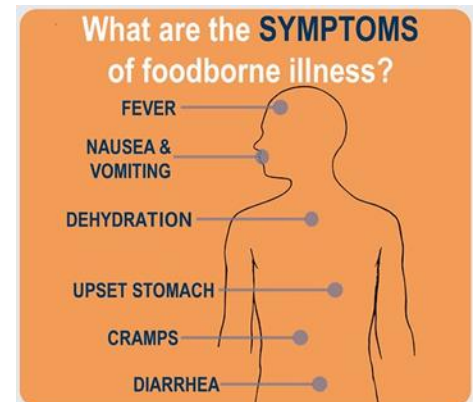


## Foodborne Illness Symptoms

In severe cases, foodborne illnesses can cause serious acute illness, long-term health problems or death. **Simple foodborne illness** can present as a stomach ache, nausea or vomiting.

*See your doctor or healthcare provider if you have:*

- High fever (temperature over 101.5°F, measured orally).
- Blood in the stools.
- Frequent vomiting that prevents you from keeping liquids down.
- Signs of dehydration, including a decrease in urination, a dry mouth and throat, and feeling dizzy when standing up.
- Diarrheal illness that lasts more than 3 days



## Food Safety Tips

### 1. Wash Hands with Soap and Water

Often times, the people want to blame food for their illness when it is actually the fact that their hands were not washed before food preparation and eating. Prior to any food preparation or grabbing something to eat, the best way to stay germ free is to wash hands with warm water and soap for a minimum of 20 seconds. Add repeated hand washing when working with raw foods including meat, poultry and eggs. Dry hands with a single paper towel or fresh kitchen towel that has not been used to wipe down counter tops. Always wash hands after handling garbage and trash.



### 2. Cutting Boards and Cross Contamination

Wood cutting boards need to be made from hard wood to reduce splintering, which allows and holds on to bacteria. Plastic cutting boards are easy to clean but sharp grooves and scars allow bacteria to get in quickly. Plastic boards can be sanitized by using a bleach spray product or making your own from

one tablespoon of Clorox Bleach in one gallon of water. Plastic cutting boards can be placed in the dish washer at high temperatures for sanitizing. Since they are usually inexpensive, plastic boards can be replaced more frequently.

*The most important thing to remember is to use one cutting board for raw foods and place it in the sink immediately. Take a second cutting board and a second knife, after you have washed your hands, to prepare other foods to prevent cross contamination.*

### **3. Sponges and Dish Rags**

Wet sponges and dish rags can harbor mold, yeast and bacteria from the moisture. After use, wash them in hot soapy water. You can place them in the dishwasher or microwave which will kill 99% of the bacteria. Sanitize sponges every other day and replace them often.

### **4. Do Not Rinse Raw Meat Prior To Cooking**

People assume raw meat and poultry should be rinsed prior to cooking. Rinsing raw meat actually spreads bacteria around the sink and counter tops which can affect other foods close by. Bacteria are destroyed with the heat of the cooking process.

### **5. Be Wary of Bacteria in Foods**

Bacteria can grow in meats and poultry (Salmonella), dairy, eggs, raw garlic stored in oil, melons (Listeria), sliced tomatoes, hot peppers, sprouts, cooked rice, beans, pasta and potatoes. Raw fruits and vegetables need to be carefully washed since water and fertilizer can be tainted with bacteria. Many times, when sickened from a chicken salad sandwich, people think it is from the mayonnaise; but it is actually from the celery.

### **6. Properly Defrost Food**

Many people think it is OK to defrost food at room temperature on the counter top or in the sink. It is wise to thaw in the refrigerator or in the microwave to avoid 'The Temperature Danger Zone. Otherwise more bacteria will be present.

### **7. Cook Foods Completely Do not assume food is thoroughly cooked just by looking at it.**

When cooking burgers, poultry, and pork, make sure food is fully cooked by inserting a digital or dial thermometer for an internal temperature of 165 degrees F. This is helpful in grilling, baking or roasting to make sure the food will not expose you to bacteria, especially since under-cooked meat can cause E-Coli.

### **8. Properly Marinate Food**

Place foods in the refrigerator when marinating, not at room temperature, and do not reuse marinade for cooked food. Leave some marinade which has not touched the raw food for dipping.

### **9. Putting Food Away**

Once food is prepared and eaten, place the leftovers in the refrigerator within 1 hour in warm weather and within 2 hours in cool weather. Keeping food cool will prevent the growth of bacteria. Set your phone alarm to remind you if you are having a party and might forget.

### **10. Do Not Leave Hot Food Out**

Do not place hot foods on the counter for more than 30 minutes which could cause the spread of bacteria. If you have cooked large portions of soups, stews or casseroles, place them in smaller containers no deeper than 2 inches to let them cool more quickly and place them in the refrigerator.



### ***11. The Proper Way to Reheat Food***

When taking leftovers out of the refrigerator, reheat foods to a full boil or bubble before eating. This includes soups, stews, crock pot and casseroles. Mix foods thoroughly so the internal temperature gets to 165 F throughout the dish.

### ***12. Do Not Overstuff the Refrigerator***

When foods are jammed in the refrigerator, there is no air circulation and flow which will not allow food to be refrigerated properly. Use the drawers for fresh fruits and vegetables as well as packaged meats and cheeses. Put the food you use often near the front and those less used in the back.

### ***13. Wash Reusable Grocery Bags Often***

Although wonderful for the environment, it is recommended that you frequently wash these reusable bags. Raw meat, poultry and eggs can leave behind bacteria which can transfer to your next shopping trip.

### ***14. Dispose of Leftovers After a Few Days***

Consume or dispose of leftovers within 3-4 days for a safer bet. Freezing leftovers is easy and can be used at a later date.

### ***15. Dispose of Expired Food***

You may not be able to smell or see changes in your food that contains bacteria, so be on the safe side and dispose of expired food. Be alert to foods that have been recalled and never use them.



**If you have any questions about TOPIC, please reach out to CompassionLink at [info@compassionlink.org](mailto:info@compassionlink.org). We will be happy to answer your questions.**

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#### **Sources:**

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