



NUTRITION NEWS!

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Elementary Nutrition Education Newsletter

Be Food Safe

Spring has long been the time of year for annual cleaning projects around our homes. However, when it comes to safe food handling, everything that comes in contact with food must be kept clean all year long.

The easiest way for bacteria to enter our bodies is through our food. It is always best to be careful when preparing and storing our food in order to avoid food poisoning.

The USDA developed the *Be Food Safe* campaign in cooperation with the Partnership for Food Safety Education, FDA, and CDC because research shows that Americans are aware of food safety, but they need more information to achieve and maintain safe food handling behaviors.



Spring Cleaning the Kitchen

When you're shaking off the winter with spring cleaning, it's a great time to target harmful bacteria that can lurk in your kitchen. Some cleaning tips you should practice year round to make your kitchen safer include:

- Always clean and disinfect surfaces thoroughly with hot water and soap.
- Frequently wash cloth towels in hot water and replace sponges frequently.
- Clean your refrigerator weekly.
- Disinfect your sink drain and disposal by pouring in a solution of 3/4 teaspoon chlorine bleach per quart of water.
- Clean your microwave by heating a microwave-safe bowl filled with water on high for approximately 4 minutes, followed by washing with hot water and dish soap.

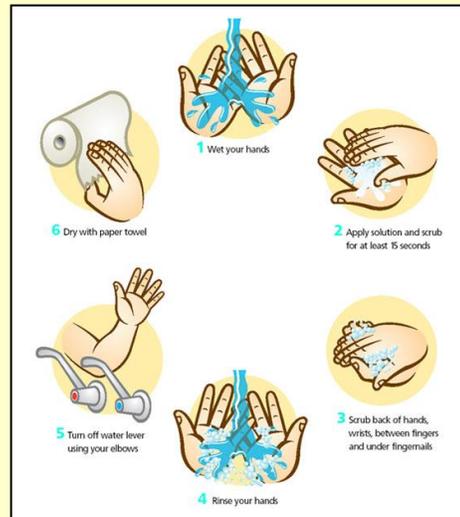
Be Food Safe means preventing foodborne illness through four easy steps: Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill.

- Clean: Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Separate: Don't cross-contaminate.
- Cook: Cook to proper temperatures.
- Chill: Refrigerate promptly.

Storing Foods Safely

If your family's meals are to be dependably safe, follow these rules for food storage and preparation:

- **Keep your refrigerator at the right temperature for all foods.** The refrigerator should be 40°F or colder; your freezer should be set at 0°F or lower.
- **Store raw meat and poultry carefully.** Your best bet is putting them in containers or on dishes to keep juices from dripping onto other foods or onto refrigerator shelves.
- **Clean up well after preparing raw meat and poultry.** Always clean utensils, dishes, and countertops with hot, soapy water so that juices don't come into contact with other foods.
- **Cut raw meat or poultry on a plastic or other nonporous cutting board.** Wooden boards may have cracks in them that make proper cleaning difficult, according to the USDA. The USDA advises washing your hands and utensils after handling raw meats and washing all cutting boards in the dishwasher as higher temperatures will kill more bacteria. Wooden chopping boards may also be disinfected with vinegar.



Did you wash your hands?

The next time you're told to step up to the sink and scrub up, remember these handy hints:

1. Use warm water (not cold or hot) when you wash your hands.
2. Use whatever soap you like. Some soaps come in cool shapes and colors or smell nice, but whatever kind gets you scrubbing is the kind you should use. Antibacterial soaps are OK to use, but regular soap works fine.
3. Work up some lather on both sides of your hands, your wrists, and between your fingers. Don't forget to wash around your nails. This is one place germs like to hide. Wash for about 10 to 15 seconds — about how long it takes to sing "Happy Birthday." (Sing it quickly two times or just once if you go nice and slow.)
4. Rinse, turn off faucets by not touching with your hand, and dry well with a clean towel.