



## Food Safety

Seniors are more susceptible to food borne illness. According to, To Your Health! Food Safety for seniors, (FDA/Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition USDA/Food Safety and Inspection Service, October 2000; updated November 2004, <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/sr2.html>)

“Everyone's health is different, including his or her ability to fight off disease. But immune systems weaken as we age. In addition, stomach acid also decreases as we get older -- and stomach acid plays an important role in reducing the number of bacteria in our intestinal tracts -- and the risk of illness. Plus underlying illnesses such as diabetes, some cancer treatments, and kidney disease may increase a person's risk of food borne illness.”

### ***Food Safety Hints***

- ◆ Hands should be washed with warm soapy water before handling food and each time you change foods handled.
- ◆ Wash cutting boards and counters each time you change type of food handled. It is wise to use a solution of 1teaspoon chlorine bleach to 1-quart water on the counters and cutting boards.
- ◆ Never thaw foods at room temperature. Always thaw foods in the refrigerator or in cold water.
- ◆ Follow the 2-hour rule; never leave any food, hot or cold at room temperature for more than two hours.
- ◆ Thoroughly cook foods. Follow the chart below to ensure food safety.

Taken from: “Food Safety of the Elderly”

<http://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/HGIC3642.htm>

Internal Minimum Temperature	Type Of Food
145°	Beef, lamb, veal
160°	Egg dishes, Ground beef, veal & lamb Pork – all cuts
165°	Leftovers Poultry Stuffing and casseroles
Opaque	Fish

- ◆ Rinse produce thoroughly.
- ◆ Consider using paper toweling to clean contaminated surfaces instead of dish clothes that can spread the contaminate.
- ◆ Refrigerate or freeze prepared foods as soon as possible, but not longer than 2 hours.

### ***Foods Unadvisable For Older Adults To Eat***

There are some foods seniors are advised not to eat.

Information taken from <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/sr2.html> To reduce risks of illness from bacteria in food, seniors (and others who face special risks of illness) are advised not to eat:

- Raw finfish and shellfish, including oysters, clams, mussels, and scallops.
- Hot dogs and luncheon meats, unless they are reheated until steaming hot.
- Raw or Unpasteurized milk or soft cheeses (such as Feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined, and Mexican-style cheese) unless they are labeled "made with pasteurized milk".
- Refrigerated pates or meat spreads. Canned or shelf-stable pates and meat spreads may be eaten.
- Refrigerated smoked seafood unless it is contained in a cooked dish, such as a casserole. Refrigerated smoked seafood, such as salmon, trout, whitefish, cod, tuna, or mackerel, is often labeled as "nova-style," "lox," "kippered," "smoked," or "jerky." These products are found in the refrigerator section or sold at deli counters of grocery stores and delicatessens. Canned or shelf-stable smoked seafood may be eaten.
- Raw or lightly cooked egg or egg products containing raw eggs such as salad dressings, cookie or cake batter, sauces, and beverages such as egg nog. (Foods made from commercially pasteurized eggs are safe to eat.)
- Raw meat or poultry.
- Raw sprouts (alfalfa, clover, and radish)
- Unpasteurized or untreated fruit or vegetable juice (These juices will carry a warning label.)
- New information on food safety is constantly emerging. Recommendations and precautions are updated as scientists learn more about preventing food borne illness. You need to be aware of and follow the most current information on food safety. See the information at the end of this document for ways to learn about food safety updates.

### ***Food safety for the recipient***

- ◆ Remind them to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- ◆ If the meal is delivered ready to eat; remind them to eat it within two hours
- ◆ Take a look in their refrigerator for any “red flags” as far as food safety goes.
- ◆ Remind them when reheating to make sure it is heated to steaming or 165° F.
- ◆ REHEATING INSTRUCTIONS
  - Remove aluminum foil and covers
  - Cover w/ waxed paper
  - Handle meal w/ pot holders when removing

A good links to follow are:

*Safe Food Handling; Seniors Need Wisdom on Food Safety*

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Seniors\\_Need\\_Wisdom\\_on\\_Food\\_Safety/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Seniors_Need_Wisdom_on_Food_Safety/index.asp)

*To Your Health; Food Safety for Seniors*

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~acrobat/sr2.pdf>