



Simple Tips to Keep Your Food Safe

Did You Know?

- The majority of food poisoning cases are preventable if proper food handling techniques are followed.
- Usually food poisoning symptoms last 1-2 days, but in severe cases, it can lead to long term health problems or be fatal.
- Bacteria that cause foodborne illness grow quickest between 40° and 140° F.

We're all guilty of leaving a pizza out too long, not washing our apple before we eat it, or forgetting to wash the cutting board between foods. But dangerous food practices can have serious and even fatal consequences. Here are some common scenarios and suggestions for how to deal with them to ensure safety.

Scenario #1 – *You order that delicious cheese pizza to eat while watching the game. It sits on the coffee table for hours and you continue to eat it.*

- Foods that have the potential to go bad, most likely will. Make sure to refrigerate foods and leftovers within **2 hours** in order to maintain their quality and limit the growth of harmful bacteria.

Scenario #2 – *You put the pizza in the fridge, but totally forget about it. Three weeks later you remember, and try a bite to see how it tastes.*

- Never taste a food that has the potential to have gone bad. While the food may smell and taste fine to you, it could be filled with harmful bacteria that could make you sick. To prevent this, put **dates and times** on foods when you put them in the fridge and know how long each food can safely be stored. Leftover pizza should be consumed within 5 days.

Scenario #3 – *You have a long day ahead of you, so you pull a frozen chicken breast out and place it on the counter so it will be thawed by the time you come home.*

- Never thaw meat, fish or poultry at room temperature-- the ideal temperature for microorganisms to grow rapidly. Plan ahead and thaw frozen meats in the refrigerator or in a microwave oven just before cooking. Be sure to use a container to catch any juices that could potentially contaminate other foods, too.

Scenario #4 – *You don't wash your hands before preparing food.*

Washing your hands is one of the easiest ways to ensure bad bacteria are not spread to your foods. Always wash your hands for **20 seconds** with soap and hot water before handling food!



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