

# Play It Safe with Food

Know how to prepare, handle, and store food properly to keep you and your family safe.



**Clean hands and food-contact surfaces before preparing, cooking, or eating food.**

**Rinse fruits and vegetables with clean water before cooking or serving.**

**Avoid spreading bacteria to other foods.** (See page 2 of handout.)

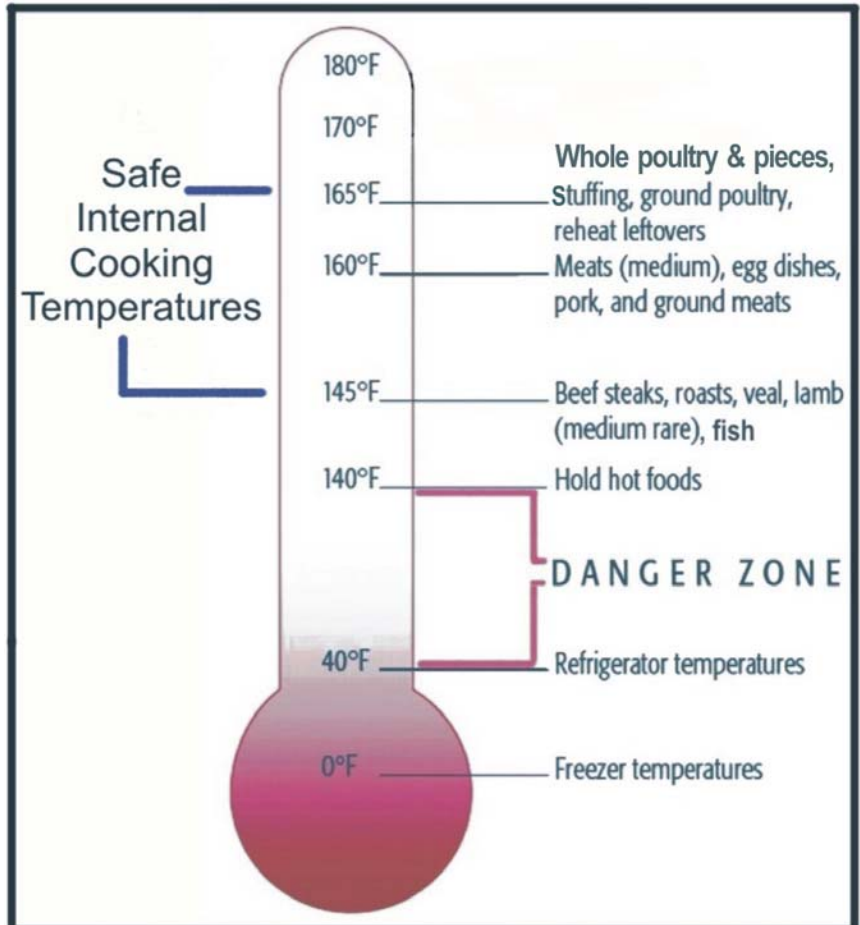
**Separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing, and storing.**

**Thaw foods in the refrigerator or in the microwave oven.** Food thawed in the microwave should be cooked immediately.

**Cook meat, poultry, and fish to safe internal temperatures to destroy the bacteria.** Use a food thermometer to be sure meat is fully cooked. This is the only way to accurately determine a safe internal temperature is reached.

**Chill perishable foods promptly.**

**DANGER ZONE** - Keep hot foods hot (140°F and above) and cold foods cold (40°F and below).



## **Prevent listeriosis--properly store and cook meat, poultry, and dairy products.**

Listeriosis is an illness caused by a harmful bacterium, listeria, that can grow in the refrigerator and survive freezing but is destroyed with thorough cooking. Ready-to-eat foods such as hot dogs, luncheon meats, soft cheeses, deli-style meats and poultry are foods associated with listeria. Older adults, newborns, pregnant women, and those with weakened immune systems are considered at risk because they are more susceptible to listeriosis.

### **Reduce your risk for listeriosis:**

- Store ready-to-eat foods at 40°F or lower.
- Use perishable and ready-to-eat foods as soon as possible.
- Canned paté and meat spreads can be eaten, but do not eat refrigerated paté or meat spreads.
- Canned seafood can be eaten. Do not eat refrigerated smoked seafood unless it is used in a dish that will be cooked before eaten.
- Do not drink raw (unpasteurized) milk or eat foods containing raw milk.
- Hot dogs and luncheon meats should be reheated until steaming hot.
- Clean the refrigerator often.

## **Prevent spreading harmful bacteria from one food to another.**

- Separate raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood from other foods in your grocery store shopping cart and in your refrigerator.
- To prevent juices from raw meat, poultry, fish, or seafood from dripping onto other foods in your refrigerator, place these raw foods in sealed containers or plastic bags.
- If possible, use one cutting board for raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood and another one for fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Always wash hands, cutting boards, dishes, and utensils with hot, soapy water after coming in contact with raw meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, and unwashed fresh produce.
- Place cooked food on a clean plate.
- Marinades used on raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood should not be tasted or reused on cooked foods.
- Meat and poultry should not be rinsed or washed. Rinsing and washing these foods may cause bacteria that are present on their surfaces to spread to ready-to-eat foods, kitchen utensils and food-contact surfaces.



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