

Food safety score

1) I always wash my hands after using the toilet	yes	no
2) I always wash the chopping board with detergent and dry it well after use, especially after cutting up raw meat or chicken, or I use a separate board	yes	no
3) I like my hamburgers rare	no	yes
4) I defrost precooked and ready to eat food on the bench top	no	yes
5) When I store food which has just been cooked, I let it cool to room temperature on the bench before putting it into the fridge	no	yes
6) I know that the fridge in my home is kept at or below 5 degrees Celsius	yes	no
7) I sometimes use the dish towel to clean the kitchen benches	no	yes
8) I wash visible dirt from vegetables before eating them	yes	no
9) I cover ready-to eat food such as salads before I put it into the fridge	yes	no
10) I store my bags or trays of raw chicken and meat from the shop at the top of the fridge	no	yes
11) I spread my dishcloth or sponge out between uses so that it can dry out.	yes	no
12) When I have a BBQ, I put the cooked meat onto the same plate I used to carry out the raw meat to save washing-up	no	yes
Total		

Score rating

Column 1	12 Excellent
Column 1	9-11 Pretty good but could be improved
Column 1	8 or less. You need to learn more about handling food safely.

Explanation

1) Always wash and dry hands thoroughly:

- after using the toilet;
- before touching or eating food;
- after touching raw meat, fish, chicken or unwashed vegetables;
- after blowing your nose;
- after touching a pet.

2) Always wash the chopping board with detergent and dry well after preparing meat, poultry or fish. This is particularly important to prevent cross-contamination when the juices from the meat are left on the board and then transferred to ready to eat food such as salads when they are prepared on the same board. A separate chopping board can also be used.

3) Meats which have gone through any processing such as hamburgers, sausages or rolled and stuffed meats should always be well done because bacteria could have got into the centre of these meats during the processing. They need to be cooked right through to the centre to kill the bacteria. Whole pieces of meat can be eaten rare.

4) When precooked or ready to eat foods are defrosted on the bench top, they spend too much time in the temperature danger zone - between 5 and 60 degrees Celsius. When food stays at these temperatures for long periods, bacteria which cause food poisoning can grow very quickly and make the food unsafe to eat. The exception is with some items, such as baked goods, where the manufacturer recommends defrosting at room temperature.

5) Letting food cool to room temperature on the bench before putting it into the fridge means leaving in the temperature danger zone for too long. Food should be put in the fridge as soon as it stops steaming.

6) Fridges should be kept at 5 degrees Celsius or below to keep food out of the temperature danger zone. There will be times when your fridge thermometer reads a higher temperature because the fridge is in a defrosting cycle or the door has been opened constantly. This is ok provided that at some time during the day the temperature drops to 5 degrees or below. Most people do not know what temperature their fridge is at because they don't have a fridge thermometer.

7) Using the dish towel to clean kitchen benches allows it to pick up bacteria from the bench. When you later use it to dry the dishes, the bacteria are transferred to the dishes and then onto the food served on those dishes.

8) Always wash visible dirt from vegetables before eating it as it could carry food poisoning bacteria.

9) All ready to eat food, such as salads or fruit should be kept covered in the fridge to avoid bacteria from stored raw meat or chicken cross-contaminating the ready to eat food.

10) To prevent cross-contamination, raw chicken and meat should be stored near the bottom of the fridge. The bags and trays you buy your meat in will not stop juices dripping onto any ready to eat food stored below.

11) Wet dish cloths provide a good environment for bacteria to grow. The bacteria is then spread from the cloth - to the dishes - to the food. Drying helps to kill the bacteria in the cloth. If you use a brush or mop, it too should be allowed to dry between uses.

12) A plate used for raw meat, chicken or fish will have picked up bacteria from the raw foods. The bacteria on the meat, chicken or fish will have been killed by the cooking process. If the cooked meat is then returned to the plate which contained the food when it was raw, it will again pick up these bacteria from the plate, and as it does not undergo any further cooking, the bacteria will be eaten and could cause food poisoning.

Need more information?

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