

SENIOR NUTRITION NOTES
Washtenaw County OCED
415 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti, MI 48197
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Some people are more likely to get sick from harmful bacteria that can be found in food. To avoid bacteria build up in foods it is important that food is kept at appropriate temperatures. Bacteria tends to grow most rapidly between 40 degrees and 145 degrees F. Bacteria affects everyone differently, though we know that older adults can be more susceptible to foodborne illnesses due to weakened immune systems and previously existing illnesses.

You can keep yourself safe and healthy by following four basic rules—***Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill.***

1. Clean: Wash hands and surfaces often. Wash your hands with warm water and soap before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers and handling pets. Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils and counter tops with hot water and soap after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next food.

2. Separate: Food separation is especially important when handling raw meat, poultry and seafood, so keep these foods and their juices away from foods that aren't going to be cooked. If possible, use a different cutting board for raw meat, poultry and seafood products. Always wash cutting boards, dishes and utensils with hot soapy water after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, eggs and unwashed fresh produce.

3. Cook: Cook to the right temperatures. Food safety experts agree that foods are safely cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness. (***see safe cooking temperatures on reverse*) When cooking in a microwave oven, make sure there are no cold spots in food where bacteria can survive. To do this, cover food, stir and rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking.

4. Chill: Did You Know? At room temperature, bacteria in food can double every 20 minutes. The more bacteria there are, the greater the chance you could become sick. So, refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from multiplying. A lot of people think it will harm their refrigerator to put hot food inside—it's not true. It won't harm your refrigerator and it will keep your food—and you—safe. Set your home refrigerator to 40°F or below and the freezer unit to 0°F or below. Check the temperature occasionally with an appliance thermometer.