

Resolve To Be Food Safe

USDA Checklist For Cooks And Consumers

(NAPSA)—There are some New Year's resolutions that could save you a trip to the doctor or even the hospital. These resolutions to "Be Food Safe" may be easier to keep for yourself and your family than you realize.

The USDA advises putting these "food safety" resolutions at the top of your New Year's list:

1. I will wash my hands and all food preparation surfaces with soap and water before and after touching raw meat, poultry or fish. Bacteria on raw meat, fish or poultry can contaminate other foods such as bread or lettuce that will not be cooked.

2. I will separate cooked foods from uncooked foods when preparing a meal, including using separate cutting boards and knives. Cross-contamination could cause harmful bacteria from one food to be transferred to another food.

3. I will buy and use a food thermometer. It's the only way to know if meat, poultry and fish are cooked safely. You can't tell just by looking.

4. I will use an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and will check to make sure that the temperature is 40° F or below. In the freezer, I will make sure the thermometer reads 0° F or below. Bacteria grows rapidly at temperatures above 40° F.

5. I will NOT defrost my meat on the counter. The only safe way to defrost food is in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave.



6. I will NOT lick the spoon or the bowl of homemade cookie dough or cake batter made with raw eggs. Salmonellosis is a very unpleasant and potentially dangerous illness that can come from eating raw eggs; even one taste of raw dough could cause harm.

Guessing about food safety can put the health of your family and friends at risk. If you have a question about food safety, please call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline toll-free at 1 (888) MPHOTline, or 1 (888) 674-6854; TTY: 1 (800) 256-7072. Questions can be answered in English and Spanish. Food Safety Specialists can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.

Consumers with food safety questions can also "Ask Karen," the FSIS (Food Safety and Inspection Service) virtual representative available 24 hours a day at AskKaren.gov.