

Food Safety

HELPFUL HINTS FROM EXPERTS

The Importance Of Safe Food Preparation

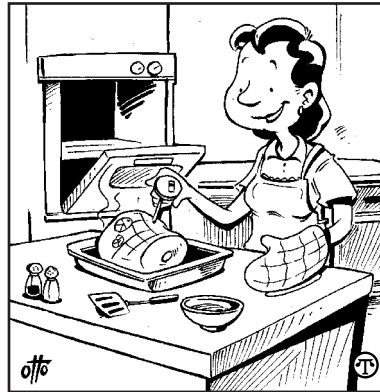
(NAPSA)—From shopping cart to dinner plate, there are a number of easy steps you can take to ensure that food is as safe as it can be.

Separate: Keep raw meat, poultry, fish and vegetables separate. When the store packs your groceries, insist that frozen foods stay together, vegetables go in the same bag, meats with meats, etc. If anything is dripping, have the store put those items in a plastic bag. Juices are a primary carrier of bacteria.

Refrigerate: When you get your groceries home, chill them immediately. Make certain your refrigerator is working properly and is set at the appropriate temperature. To ensure proper temperature, purchase a thermometer for both your refrigerator and your freezer. The air temperature of your refrigerator should be 40 degrees Fahrenheit and the freezer 0 degrees. Anything that might drip should be placed in a sealed container or a plastic bag and placed at the bottom of the refrigerator so as not to drip on other foods.

Clean: Wash your hands and all of the utensils that will be used while preparing your food. Clean knives, can openers, cutting boards, plates and platters, etc. It is strongly recommended that you have a separate cutting board for poultry, raw meat, vegetables and fish. Having separate boards will ensure greater safety. If that is not possible, make sure that you wash the board between using it for different products.

Cook: Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a



According to NextDayGourmet.com, most food-borne illness can be avoided if food is handled properly.

long enough time at a high enough temperature. Invest in a meat thermometer and an oven thermometer. Use a meat thermometer when cooking, internal temperatures should be at least 145 degrees Fahrenheit for steaks, 160 degrees for hamburger and 180 degrees for poultry. According to a recent study, only two percent of consumers regularly use a food thermometer when cooking ground meat.

As one of the largest online providers of professional kitchen gadgets, tools and specialty food items, NextDayGourmet.com offers more than 6,000 of the finest selection of quality kitchen items available in the industry. The site has everything amateur and professional chefs need to ensure safe food preparation—from cutting boards and thermometers to professional-grade storage containers.

For more kitchen safety tips, visit www.NextDayGourmet.com.