

FOOD SAFETY AT HOME

Food Poisoning and foodborne illnesses are caused by eating or drinking contaminated food or drinks.

There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted through food.

According to data provided by the NSW Food Authority, over 4 million Australians experience food poisoning each year.

Food poisoning can occur from eating out at a retail food premises or from food prepared at home.



Retail food premises are required by the Food Act to produce food that is safe for human consumption. We can adopt the same practical measures when preparing food at home. These include:

1. Wash your hands before you start food preparation and between jobs and try to use single use paper towels to dry your hands. If kitchen tea towels are used, ensure that they are clean and used for drying hands only.

2. If you're sick do not make food, have a break and let others cook for you or order in food.
3. Keep sick family members away from the food preparation area.
4. Clean, sanitise and dry all food benches and equipment after use.
5. Ensure high risk foods such as meat and chicken are stored in sealed bags or containers away from cooked food and fresh fruits and vegetables.
6. Prepare high risk food separately to prevent cross contamination. For example, separate raw and cooked food using different cutting boards and knives.
7. Check the 'use by' and 'best before' dates to ensure they are still good to use.
8. Leftovers including takeaway foods should be refrigerated immediately. Reheat food until it's over 75°C.
9. Invest in a food grade probe thermometer. They are inexpensive and are a handy tool to help to measure temperature of your food.



More Tips

- Rice has bacteria called *Bacillus Cereus*. The bacteria produce toxins if cooked rice is left at room temperature for more than two hours. Cover and refrigerate cooked rice to prevent bacteria growth.
- A piece of chicken is cooked through when the juices run clear.
- Minced meat has greater surface area than steak and therefore present greater risk of bacterial contamination. So, burgers must be cooked through to minimize the risk of food poisoning.
- Food cans that are damaged could indicate that the food inside is spoiled.

Sous-vide Cooking

Sous-vide is a cooking method where food is cooked in sealed pouches or air tight plastic bags at low temperature in water.

To prevent bacteria growth during Sous vide cooking:

- Slice food thinner for short cooking time,
- Do not leave food to cook below 55°C for more than 6 hours, and
- Don't keep cooked food for more than (5) five days.

Allergies and Food intolerances

Sometimes food allergies or intolerances can be mistaken for food poisoning.

Food allergy - immune system reaction to a food

Food intolerance - inability to digest a food.

Both can cause illness and in some cases death. If you or a family member has food allergies and/or food intolerances, carefully read ingredient labels and allergy warnings on labels before purchasing the food.

Where can I find more information?

For information regarding COVID-19 go to: www.health.nsw.gov.au

For information regarding food safety and COVID-19 go to: www.foodstandards.gov.au

For information regarding food safety at home, go to: www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumer/food-at-home

For further information regarding food hygiene, please contact Council's Environmental Health Officer on:

Phone: 9330 6400

E-mail: mail@georgesriver.nsw.gov.au