

Food Safety

Good nutrition is important at any age

Food can cause illness when it is not handled safely. Common mistakes include not cooking, chilling, or reusing foods properly, cross-contamination with raw foods or allergens, and unclean surfaces, utensils, dishes, or hands.

SYMPTOMS OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS

You may feel sick right after eating unsafe food, or you might feel sick days or weeks later. Often, symptoms do not last long, but they can become serious and require medical attention.

Symptoms to watch out for:

- Stomach cramps
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Fever and chills

If you think you have a foodborne illness, report it to your healthcare provider.

FOOD RECALL WARNINGS

Food recalls happen when a **food producer stops sales** as it is believed that a product **may cause foodborne illness**.

Foods can be recalled due to discovery of:

- Microorganisms (e.g., bacteria or parasites)
- Foreign objects (e.g., glass or metal)
- Major allergens that do not appear on the nutrition label

More information on local food recalls and warnings found [here](#).

SAFE FOOD HANDLING PRACTICES

There are many things that you can do to **prevent spoilage, cross-contamination, and foodborne illness.**

Tips for safe food handling:



Wash your hands before, during, and after handling food



Clean surfaces, dishes, and utensils before and after use



Use different cutting boards, dishes, and utensils for fresh foods (e.g., vegetables, fruits, and grains) and raw meats



Keep hot foods at or above 60°C (140°F)



Do not leave perishable food out for more than:

- 1 hour during summer outdoor activities
- 2 hours at room temperature



Refrigerate foods at 4°C (40°F) or lower



Freeze foods at -18°C (0°F) or lower



Check local food advisories and recalls



Throw away spoiled food (e.g., mold, weird texture, bad smell)

You cannot always tell if a food is spoiled by its appearance, smell, or taste. When in doubt, throw it out!

Brought to you by the Nutrition & Aging Lab at the University of Waterloo.
© R. Donnelly, C. Wei, V. Trinca, & H. Keller 2020, version 3

Learn more! Explore helpful resources and tools at: food-guide.canada.ca