



Keeping Food Safe in Your Kitchen

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Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

Why Food Safety Matters

Every day, millions of people around the world get sick from eating food that wasn't prepared safely. **Food poisoning** happens when **harmful bacteria** or **germs** grow on food and make us unwell. The good news is that following simple **food safety rules** can protect you and your family.

Think of it like protecting your bedroom—just as you keep dirt out to stay clean, you keep germs away from food to keep it safe to eat.

The Temperature Rule

One of the most important rules is keeping food at the right **temperature**. **Raw meat, poultry, and fish** must be stored in the coldest part of your **refrigerator**, below **5°C**. Hot foods should stay above **63°C**. Never leave cooked food sitting on the counter for more than **2 hours**—bacteria multiply quickly at **room temperature**.

When cooking, **chicken must reach 75°C** inside, and **beef** can be cooked less but still safely. Using a **food thermometer** takes the guesswork out.

Keeping Things Clean

Cleanliness is your best defence. Always wash your **hands with soap and warm water** for at least **20 seconds** before preparing food and after touching raw meat. Wash **chopping boards, knives, and plates** thoroughly after they've touched raw food.

Think of it like washing your hands before eating lunch at school—you're washing away invisible dirt that could make you sick.

Storage Secrets

Where you store food matters hugely. Keep **raw meat separate** from vegetables and ready-to-eat foods to avoid **cross-contamination**. **Eggs, dairy, and opened tins**

belong on shelves, never on the door where it's warmer. Always use **airtight containers** to prevent bacteria spreading.

Check **use-by dates** carefully—these show when food is no longer safe, even if it looks fine. **Best before dates** only mean the taste or texture might change, not the safety.

The Golden Rules

Remember: cook food thoroughly, keep it at safe temperatures, maintain cleanliness, and avoid cross-contamination. These **four key steps** are the foundation of kitchen food safety.