



Safe steps in food handling, cooking, and proper storage are important in preventing food borne illness. This tip sheet includes the four Fight BAC!® guidelines that will help prevent you and your family from getting sick from food.

TIP #1- CLEAN: Wash Hands and Surfaces Often

Germs can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, utensils, sponges and countertops. Make sure you:

- **Wash your hands** with hot soapy water before preparing food, after handling raw meats, and after using the bathroom.
- **Wash cutting boards**, dishes, utensils with hot soapy water before preparing each food item.
- **Use plastic or non-porous cutting boards**. Make sure to wash them after every use.

TIP #2- SEPARATE: Don't Cross Contaminate

Spreading germs from one food product to another is called cross-contamination. To prevent this from happening, make sure you:

- **Separate** raw meat, poultry (i.e. chicken, turkey), and seafood from other foods in your grocery cart, shopping bag, and refrigerator (store at bottom of refrigerator).
- **Always wash** hands, cutting boards, dishes and utensils with hot soapy water after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry and sea food.
- **Never place cooked food back** on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, seafood or eggs.

TIP #3- COOK: Cook to proper temperatures

Food safety experts agree that foods are properly cooked when heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria that cause food-borne illness. Make sure you:

- **Measure the internal temperature** of cooked meat, poultry, and egg products with a food thermometer.

- **Cook to the right temperature.**

Turkey, Chicken, & Duck	165°F
Beef, Veal, Lamb– Ground	160°F
Egg Dishes	160°F
Pork	160°F
Beef, Veal, Lamb– Steaks and Roasts	145°F
Fish	145°F

- **When cooking in a microwave,** stir or rotate food half way through the microwaving time to get rid of cold spots where harmful bacteria can survive.
- **When reheating,** bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a boil before serving.

TIP #4- CHILL: Refrigerate promptly

Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep dangerous germs from growing and multiplying. Make sure you:

- **Refrigerate or freeze** perishables (foods that will spoil when left out at room temperature), prepared foods, and leftovers within 2 hours.
- **Thaw food in the refrigerator.** Make sure thawing meat and poultry juices don't drip on other food.
- **Cool air must flow** to keep food safe. Don't over pack the refrigerator.

More safety tips:

- **Always wash hands** with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- **Set the right temperature.** The refrigerator should be at or below 40°F and the freezer at 0°F.
- **Toss out any food left out** at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

Sources

1. *Safe Food Handling.* United States Department of Agriculture. <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/FactSheets>
2. *Fight BAC!.* Partnership for Food Safety Education. <http://www.fightbac.org/content/view/6/11/>

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.