



## Who's at Risk

Certain groups of people are more susceptible to foodborne illness. This means that they are more likely to get sick from contaminated food, if they do get sick, the effects are more serious. These groups include:

- Infants & children
- Older adults
- Persons with chronic diseases

## Long-Term Effects

Did you know that one in six Americans will get sick from food poisoning this year alone? Most of them will recover without any lasting effects from their illness. For some, however, the effects can be devastating and even deadly.

**The serious long-term effects associated with several common types of food poisoning include:**

- Kidney failure
- Chronic arthritis
- Brain and nerve damage
- Death

## How to Prevent Foodborne Illness

Follow these simple four steps to food safety to keep your family safe from food poisoning:



- **Clean!** Everything that touches food should be clean. Cleanliness is a major factor in preventing foodborne illness.
- **Separate!** Fight cross-contamination! Cross-contamination is the transfer of harmful bacteria to food from other foods, cutting boards, and utensils.
- **Cook!** Use a thermometer in cooking. Using a food thermometer is the only way to tell if the food has reached a high enough temperature to destroy harmful bacteria.

Use a thermometer to measure the internal temperature of foods, such as meat, hamburgers, poultry, egg casseroles, and any combination dishes.

- **Chill!** Make sure the temperature in the refrigerator is 40° F or below and 0° F or below in the freezer. Use a refrigerator/freezer thermometer to check the temperature.

## Dangerous Food Safety Mistakes

Sometime a simple mistake can have grave consequences. What may seem like a small food mistake can cause serious illness with long-term consequences. When it comes to some germs, such as salmonella, all it takes is 15 to 20 cells in undercooked food to cause food poisoning. And just a tiny taste of food with botulism, toxin can cause paralysis and even death.

**Here are some common mistakes that have been proven to cause serious illness.**



**Mistake #1:** Tasting food to see if it's still good.

**Why:** You can't taste (or smell or see) the bacteria that cause food poisoning. Tasting only a small amount can cause serious illness.

**Solution:** Throw out before harmful bacteria grows. Follow safe storage time charts.

**Mistake #2:** Putting cooked meat back on a plate that held raw meat.

**Why:** Germs from the raw meat can spread to the cooked meat

**Solution:** Always use separate plates for raw meat and cooked meat. The same rule applies to poultry and seafood.

**Mistake #3:** Thawing food on the counter.

**Why:** Harmful germs can multiply extremely rapidly at room temperature.

**Solution:** Thaw food safely:

- In the refrigerator
- In cold water
- In the microwave

**Mistake #5:** Letting food cool before putting in the fridge

**Why:** Illness-causing bacteria can grow in perishable foods within two hours unless you refrigerate them.

**Solution:** Refrigerate perishable foods within 2 hours or within 1 hour if the temperature is over 90° F.

**Mistake #6:** Eating raw cookie dough (or other foods with uncooked eggs)

**Why:** Uncooked eggs may contain Salmonella or other harmful bacteria.

**Solution:** Always cook eggs thoroughly. Avoid foods that contain raw or undercooked eggs.

**Mistake #7:** Marinating meat or seafood on the counter.

**Why:** Harmful germs in meat or seafood can multiply extremely rapidly at room temperature.

**Solution:** Always marinate meat or seafood in the refrigerator.

**Mistake #8:** Not washing your hands.

**Why:** Germs on your hands can contaminate the food that you and others eat.

**Solution:** Wash hands the right way - for 20 seconds with soap and running water.

**National Fall  
Prevention Awareness Day**



Every September on the first day of fall, the Falls Free© coalition promotes National Falls Prevention Awareness. States are encouraged to host and

promote falls prevention awareness and screening activities to draw attention to the problem and offer seniors practical solutions. Thirty-seven states participated in the 2010 event. According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), every year one in three falls can lead to injury, hospitalization, loss of independence, and even death.

### Why Focus on Falls?

Falls and fall-related injuries among older adults are a serious public health problem in a rapidly aging population:



- One third of Americans age 65+ fall each year, meaning every 18 seconds an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall.
- Every 35 minutes an older adult dies following a fall.
- The financial toll for older adult falls is expected to increase as the population ages and may reach \$54.9 billion by 2020.
- Falls result in more than 1.8 million fall injuries treated in emergency departments, including over 480,000 hospitalizations, and approximately 16,700 deaths.
- Falls with or without injury also carry a heavy quality of life impact. A growing number of older adults fear falling and as a result often self-limit activities and social engagements.
- These limitations can result in further physical decline, depression, social isolation, and feeling of helplessness.

### How Do You Reduce Your Risk of Falls?

Effective strategies for fall prevention include:

- Regular physical activity. Exercise improves balance and coordination.
- Healthy eating. An inadequate supply of nutrients increase risks for falls.

- Having your doctor or pharmacist look at all your medicine. Some can make you sleepy or dizzy.
- Having your vision checked at least once a year by an eye doctor. Poor vision can increase the risk of falling.
- Wearing shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.
- Making changes in your home to reduce hazards.

Remember, adopting these strategies can reduce the risk of falling, the chance of injury from a fall and the loss of independence.

### **Apply for Food Stamps over the Phone!**

Elder Options offers a program that now allows low income seniors, age 60 and older, to apply for Supplemental Nutrition



Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, over the telephone with help from a trained professional. SNAP allows seniors to stretch his or her food budget at any store that accepts the food assistance benefits card and helps the local economy by increasing community spending. Anyone determined eligible will receive SNAP benefits and it will not take assistance away from others.

The goal of this program is to allow elders, unable to visit an office location or that cannot apply online, the chances to receive help through the State's Elder Helpline. More than 700 seniors have applied using this free service and the application takes 15 minutes to complete. Questions about income will be asked. Any senior looking for help with a SNAP application should call the Elder Helpline toll-free at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337) Monday-Friday 8-5 PM.

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