FOOD SAFETY FOR KIDNEY PATIENTS

Food Safety

Food safety is important for everyone to be aware of, but it is especially important for people who have a weakened immune system (like many kidney patients do). Food poisoning or food borne illness is caused by micro-organisms (bacteria, viruses, and fungi) in our food, and can make people very sick or even cause death. Since people who have received a kidney transplant take medications that suppress their immune system, they are even more vulnerable to becoming sick from food borne illness.

Safe food handling helps to protect you because properly cooking and preparing foods gets rid of most of the bacteria that could make you sick. To protect yourself and your family, follow the tips below:

- Always start with a clean kitchen; bacteria could already be waiting there! Make sure countertops, cooking surfaces and tools are clean before you get started. Use warm soapy water or cleaners designed for the kitchen.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before preparing or eating food.
- Wash vegetables and fruits with clean, running water, and use a scrub brush for produce with tough or uneven skin. This is important even if you are not going to eat the skin, since bacteria can transfer during cutting or peeling.
- Keep raw meat separate from ready to eat foods like fruits and vegetables. Wash plates, utensils, and surfaces with hot soapy water after they have come into contact with raw meat. Never return cooked meat to the same plate that held the raw meat without washing it first.
- Cook meat and poultry to the minimum internal temperatures listed in the table below and check the temperature with a digital food thermometer.
- Never eat a hamburger or any ground meat that is pink in the middle. When you eat your steak that way the bacteria on the surface of the meat get seared off, but with ground meat the bacteria are on the inside too!
- Always drink pasteurized milk, milk products, juice and cider.
- Clean the lids of canned goods before opening them.
- Keep pets away from food storage and preparation areas.
- Use the golden rule for leftovers: "If in doubt, throw it out!"

Keep food out of the danger zone!

Bacteria multiply very quickly between 40---140°F (4.4---60°C): which is why this is called the danger zone. Refrigerate perishable foods within 2 hours of cooking, and throw out any perishable foods that have been sitting at room temperature for 4 hours or longer.

When reheating foods, make sure they once again reach the minimum internal temperatures listed in the table below and only reheat foods once.

Minimum Cooking Temperatures for Meat, Fish, and Poultry

Bacteria and other microorganisms are killed by heat, so it is important that your food reaches a high enough temperature. You can't tell if something is properly cooked just by looking at it, use a digital thermometer to check and be sure!

How to check the temperature:

After removing your food from the heat source, stick your clean thermometer into the middle of the thickest part of the meat (but not right next to the bone). Read the temperature and compare it to the guidelines below. Make sure to clean your thermometer with hot soapy water before taking another reading.

For more information and meal categories, consult Health Canada Safe Cooking Temperatures.

Poultry pieces or ground (e.g. chicken breast, thigh, leg)	74°C (165°F)
Whole poultry (e.g. roast chicken, turkey, duck)	82°C (180°F)
Hamburgers, sausage or other ground meat	71°C (160°F)
Beef, lamb and veal cuts	63°C (145°F)
Pork	71°C (160°F)
Egg dishes, seafood, stuffing, or leftovers	74°C (165°F)

The material contained on this fact sheet does not constitute medical advice and is intended for informational purposes only. No one associated with The Kidney Foundation of Canada will answer medical questions via email. Please consult a health care professional for specific treatment recommendations.