During and After Shopping

- Make grocery shopping the last thing to do when running errands.
- If you live a good distance from the grocery store, make sure you take a cooler and purchase ice for those perishables.
- When at the store, separate meats from fruits and vegetables in the shopping cart. Make sure raw meat and poultry doesn’t drip on fruits and vegetables or other foods.
- Check the dates on the packages of foods to make sure the food is still safe.
- Check cans for leaks, bulges, rust or dents.
- Make sure that “safety buttons” on jars are still in the down position (jars of baby food have safety buttons).
- Check to make sure the seals on packages are still intact.
- Make sure refrigerated foods are cold to the touch and frozen foods are solid.
- Take food home right away and store it quickly and properly. Put refrigerated and frozen foods away first.

During Preparation

- Make sure you wash your hands with warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers or handling pets.
- Always use a clean cutting board.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils and countertops with hot water and soap after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs.
- Never thaw foods at room temperature.
- Wash plates between uses or use separate plates: one for holding raw meat, poultry or seafood and another for cooked foods.
- Place washed produce into clean storage containers, never return produce to original containers.
- Be aware of the tools used during cooking – never use the same knife for raw meat, poultry or seafood to chop produce or ready-to-eat foods.
- Use one cutting board for meat, poultry and seafood. Also use separate cutting boards for produce and ready-to-eat foods.
During and After the Meal

- Always use a clean plate.
- Never place cooked food on the same plate or cutting board that previously held raw food.
- Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within two hours or sooner in clean, shallow, covered containers to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying. In hot weather (90°F or above), this time is reduced to one hour.
- Make sure your refrigerator is set below 40°F. This will keep perishable foods out of what’s called the “danger zone” 40°F or above. Keep a refrigerator thermometer inside your refrigerator at all times!
- Freezing is also a smart storage option to extend to shelf life of many perishable foods. Use an appliance thermometer to ensure your freezer is at 0°Fahrenheit or below.
- Wash dishcloths and towels often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.
- Disinfect sponges in a chlorine bleach solution.
- Replace worn sponges frequently.

Important Rule of Thumb: WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!!!!

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