

SIX FOOD SAFETY TIPS DURING CANCER TREATMENT

Ridley-Tree Cancer Center Oncology Nutrition

Tip #1: Wash your hands

At least 50% of food-borne illnesses could be prevented by proper hand-washing.

DOs

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash your hands throughout the day, including after using the bathroom and playing with pets.

DON'T

- Avoid spreading bacteria by washing your hands after handling food and during meal preparation, especially when handling raw meats and produce.

Tip #2: Rinse fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables

Rinse both fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables under running water as they may carry harmful bacteria from harvesting or transport from farm to grocer.

DOs

- Rinse all fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, including those with edible skins, rinds and peels. For example, apples, peppers, oranges and bananas can be eaten as long as they have been rinsed.
- Rinse leafy greens in a salad spinner and rinse fresh and frozen berries in a colander. Even rinse bagged salad that is labeled “pre-washed” or “double/triple washed”.
- Scrub firm produce, like potatoes and cantaloupes, with a clean vegetable brush.
- Store-bought fresh juices are safe to drink, as long as the container says “heat-treated”.

DON'Ts

- Do not eat any raw sprouts like alfalfa sprouts or bean sprouts.
- Do not eat any raw fresh fruits or vegetables that are prepared outside your own home. That means don't buy pre-cut fresh fruits and vegetables, and don't eat raw fresh fruits and vegetables from a restaurant or someone else's home, only eat cooked.

Tip #3: Cook meats and eggs to proper temperature

Fully cook meats and eggs, as the cooking process can destroy harmful bacteria found in raw meats and raw eggs.

DOs

- Fully cook meats, such as beef, pork, lamb, poultry, fish and seafood, to proper temperature. (Check the resource section below for a helpful chart from The Food and Drug Administration [FDA], with the safe minimum internal temperatures to follow for different food types).
- Make sure to cook eggs so the yolks and whites are firm, not runny.

DON'Ts

- Do not eat raw sushi, oysters or ceviche.
- Do not eat runny egg yolks or raw eggs, like in some salad dressings or raw cookie dough.

Tip #4: Avoid unpasteurized dairy products

Pasteurization is the process of heating liquids or foods to destroy bacteria and other contaminants. In the grocery store, opt for pasteurized dairy products, like milk and cheese.

DOs

- Look at the ingredient list on dairy product containers. Make sure it says “made with pasteurized milk”.
- Store all dairy products at or below 40°F in the refrigerator or freezer.

DON'T

- Do not drink raw milk or eat raw cheese unless heated, like in a hot drink or casserole.

Tip #5: Prevent cross-contamination

Prevent “cross-contamination”, which means spreading unwanted bacteria from one surface to another.

DOs

- When grocery shopping, separate raw meats, from all other items in your shopping cart, your grocery bags, and in your refrigerator when you get home.
- Use different cutting boards to prepare meats and produce, or thoroughly wash your cutting board with hot water and soap between uses.

DON'T

- Do not clean your kitchen countertops and other surfaces with a cloth towel, use a clean paper towel instead.

Tip #6: Refrigerate foods and leftovers

Bacteria tends to grow more in a warm moist environment. To prevent this, refrigerate your foods and leftovers promptly.

DOs

- Refrigerate perishable foods, such as meats, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, produce and leftovers within 1 to 2 hours of cooking or purchasing.
- Defrost foods, like meats and leftovers, in the refrigerator.
- Leftovers are fine to eat as long as you eat them within 3 days. Or, you can freeze leftovers within 3 days and eat them later.

DON'T

- Do not leave milk and other refrigerator items on the kitchen counter for several hours. Refrigerate them!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information about Oncology Nutrition at Ridley-Tree Cancer Center, visit our website at <https://nutrition.ridleytreec.org>.

Resources from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

Safe minimum internal temperatures by food type:

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/safe-minimum-cooking-temperature>

Food	Type	Internal Temperature (°F)
Ground meat and meat mixtures	Beef, pork, veal, lamb	160
	Turkey, chicken	165
Fresh beef, veal, lamb	Steaks, roasts, chops Rest time: 3 minutes	145
Poultry	All Poultry (breasts, whole bird, legs, thighs, wings, ground poultry, giblets, and stuffing)	165
Pork and ham	Fresh pork, including fresh ham Rest time: 3 minutes	145
	Precooked ham (to reheat) Note: Reheat cooked hams packaged in USDA-inspected plants to 140°F	165
Eggs and egg dishes	Eggs	Cook until yolk and white are firm
	Egg dishes (such as frittata, quiche)	160
Leftovers and casseroles	Leftovers and casseroles	165
Seafood	Fish with fins	145 or cook until flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork
	Shrimp, lobster, crab, and scallops	Cook until flesh is pearly or white, and opaque
	Clams, oysters, mussels	Cook until shells open during cooking

People at risk for food poisoning:

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/people-at-risk>

For food recalls and outbreaks:

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/recalls-and-outbreaks>

Disclaimer: The information in this presentation was current at the time of print and is for informational purposes only. Please be aware that medical information is continually changing and not all information presented may apply to your specific condition. Consult your healthcare providers regarding any health concerns or questions.