

Food Safety

North American flunked food safety big time, according to a recent survey of 106 households in 81 cities across the U.S. and Canada. A private company observed meal preparation, cleanup, and storage of leftovers in these households. The participants were judged on the same health standards used to judge restaurants. The results indicated that 99% failed to meet the minimum criteria for acceptable performance. ¹

Tips to Avoid Food Borne Illness

- Wash your hands often and wash thoroughly. This is one of the biggest contributors to the transfer of bacteria and viruses!
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold (40° -140° F is the critical temperature zone which allows bacteria to grow. Keep foods colder or hotter than this range.)
- Keep your freezer at 0° to -10° F and your refrigerator at 32° to 40° F
- Never leave foods at room temperature for more than two hours
- Thoroughly wash fresh fruits and vegetables (even if they are pre-washed)
- Do not thaw foods at room temperature
- Cook foods to the appropriate internal temperature ²
 - Meats 160° F
 - Ground Meat 160-170° F
 - Poultry 170-180° F
 - Eggs 160° F (cook until yolk and white are firm)

Immunosuppressed individuals should never eat raw meat or fish.

1. Environmental Nutrition *The Newsletter of Food, Nutrition, and Health* 21:11 Nov 1998
2. Marion Bennion *Introductory Foods Tenth Edition* Prentice Hall, 1995