



BetterSafe

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

Picnics, Parties, & Gatherings...

How to Properly Handle Food and Prevent Food Poisoning

Spring is here, and along with that comes an influx of picnics, graduation parties, and various other gatherings. It's a time filled with fun and food—of course you want to make sure that germs are a “no-show” by following these six tips to avoid food poisoning.

1. Keep it clean.

- › **Wash your hands with soap and running water** (warm or cold) for at least 20 seconds before eating and handling food—especially after passing the TV's gummy remote control! Also wash your hands after using the bathroom and touching pets.
- › **Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item.**
- › **Rinse produce under running water, including those with inedible skins and rinds.** For firm-skin fruits and vegetables, rub by hand or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing.

2. Cook it well.

- › Use a food thermometer to test party favorites, like chicken wings and ground beef sliders, and any other meat or microwaved dishes on your menu.
- › Make sure chicken wings (and any other poultry dish) reach a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F and ground beef sliders reach 160 °F.

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3. Keep it safe.

- › Divide cooked food into shallow containers and store in a refrigerator or freezer until the party begins. This encourages rapid, even cooling... and discourages pre-party nibblers.
- › Hold hot foods at 140 °F or warmer. Use chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays to keep food hot on the buffet table.
- › Maintain cold foods, like salsa and guacamole, at 40 °F or colder. Nest serving dishes in bowls of ice or use small serving trays. Replace often.

4. Watch the time.

- › Follow the food packaging's recommended cooking and standing times.
 - “Cold spots”—areas that are not completely cooked—can harbor germs.
 - Always follow the “standing time,” the extra minutes that food should stand in the microwave to complete the cooking process. Then check the internal temperature with a food thermometer.

- › Track the time that food stays on the buffet.
- › Throw out anything that has been out at room temperature for two hours or more.

5. Avoid mix-ups.

- › Separate raw meats from ready-to-eat foods, like veggies, when preparing, serving, or storing foods.
- › Offer guests serving utensils and small plates to discourage them from eating directly from the bowls with dips and salsa.
- › Throw a penalty flag at double-dippers (folks who repeatedly eat or dip from a shared food dish!)

6. Get it to-go.

- › Discard any foods on the buffet for two hours or more.
- › Divide leftovers into smaller portions or pieces, place in shallow containers, and refrigerate.
- › Don't wait too long to enjoy your leftovers. Refrigerate them for three to four days, at most. Freeze them, if you won't be eating your leftovers sooner.

FAST FACTS ON FOOD SAFETY

More than 200 diseases are spread through food

Millions of people fall ill every year and many die as a result of eating unsafe food. Diarrhoeal diseases alone kill an estimated 1.5 million children annually, and most of these illnesses are attributed to contaminated food or water. Proper food preparation can prevent most foodborne diseases.

Foodborne diseases are increasing worldwide

Disease-causing organisms in food are transmitted far and wide by today's interconnected global food-chains—escalating how often and where foodborne illnesses occur.

Rapid urbanization worldwide is adding to risks, as urban dwellers eat more food prepared outside the home that may not be handled or prepared safely—including fresh foods and fish, meat and poultry.

Emerging diseases are tied to food production

About 75% of the new infectious diseases affecting humans over the past 10 years were caused by bacteria, viruses and other pathogens that started in animals and animal products. Many of these diseases in people are related to the handling of infected domestic and wild animals during food production - in food markets and at slaughter houses.

Chemical hazards can contaminate food

Acrylamide, which may cause cancer, is formed from natural ingredients during the cooking of some foods at high temperatures (generally above 120 °C), including fried potato products, baked cereal products and coffee. The food industry is working to find methods to lower exposure to such chemicals. Avoid overcooking when frying, grilling or baking food.



Day In Day Out

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

Not all Depression is Created Equally



Depression can be treated with medications or talk therapy, and both have supporters with countless studies to prove how effective they are. But researchers now know that all depression is not equal, and that different people need different approaches to get better. For someone suffering from depression, the bottom line is that depression can usually be treated effectively with one or a combination of treatments. The trick is figuring out which treatments work best for which people. Researchers are making progress toward the day they can do that. They're also developing innovative new therapies that may change the way depression is treated in the future.

Depression is more than the blues or the blahs. Everybody gets sad or feels down sometimes, but most people with the blues can lift their mood by exercising, socializing or other activities. Those with major depression can't, and their symptoms can last weeks, months or even years.

These symptoms can include:

- A persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, guilt, worthlessness or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities you once enjoyed

- Decreased energy and fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts
- Restlessness, irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms such as headaches, digestive problems and chronic pain

Some people think depression is some kind of a personal weakness, something you can will away. Research has proven otherwise. Dr. Hussein Manji, director of the Mood and Anxiety Disorders Program at NIH's National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), says,

If you've got this illness, your brain chemistry is not the way it should be. Lifestyle changes can help, but you can only do so much. You have to get treatment.

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We are learning that depression is associated with a number of medical consequences.

In fact, depression takes a physical toll that doctors can measure. “We’re learning that depression is associated with a number of medical consequences,” Manji said. It raises the risk of heart disease, high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure. The chance of someone dying after a heart attack is 4 times greater if they’re depressed.

Antidepressant medications and talk therapy are the most common treatments for depression. Your doctor might have to try several treatments before finding the combination that’s right for you. For those who don’t respond to conventional treatments, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) has been the treatment of last resort. Electrodes are placed on the head to deliver electrical impulses and cause seizures within the brain. ECT is very effective, but it has serious drawbacks: It’s costly,

requires multiple hospital visits and can result in memory loss.

Another approach researchers are taking is to try to develop better medications to treat depression. Many scientists have been intrigued by the fact it often takes people days or weeks to get better with antidepressant medications even though the drugs work very quickly to affect the molecules that brain cells use to communicate with each other. Manji explained that we now know these medications are starting a process inside cells to turn certain genes on and off, and that those genes, in turn, are the ones responsible for people getting better. “There’s been a lot of research into trying to find what those genes are,” Manji said.

The genes researchers are uncovering seem to be involved in helping nerve cells grow and survive. While nerve cells in the brain don’t seem to die with depression, they do sort of “shriveled up,” as Manji put it.

“It’s good news because maybe we can do something about it,” Manji said. Several drugs targeting these new pathways are now being developed and tested, and Manji is optimistic that new medications will be

available within the next few years.

Depression researchers hope that understanding the genes involved in depression will ultimately help doctors make better treatment decisions as well. Manji believes that as few as 4 or 5 genes might enable doctors to predict, with a simple blood test, which treatments will work best for which people.

None of these developments changes the fact that current treatments for depression still work for most people. “Most people bounce back and get totally back on their game if they get treated,” George stressed. If you or someone you know is depressed, get treatment as soon as you can.

HELPING SOMEONE WHO MAY BE DEPRESSED:

- Tell the person that you are concerned about him or her.
- Talk to the person about seeing a doctor.
- Take the person to a doctor.
- “Be there” for the person after he or she starts treatment.
- Take any comments about suicide or wishing to die seriously. If you think someone you know might be suicidal, don’t leave them alone. Try to get them to seek help immediately from an emergency room, physician or mental health professional.



TakeCharge

WELCOA'S ONLINE SELF-CARE BULLETIN



Energize *Yourself & Your Family*

Eating healthy foods and staying physically active can help you keep up with the demands of your busy life. Moving more and eating better may help you take better care of yourself and be there for the people who depend on you.

If you are overweight and inactive, you may be more likely to develop:

- certain forms of cancer
- heart disease
- high blood pressure
- stroke
- type 2 diabetes (high blood sugar)

Why move more and eat better?

You may improve your health if you move more and eat better, but that's not the only reason to be active and make healthy food choices. You can also:

- charge up your body for work, play, and family
- feel better about yourself and manage stress better
- look better in your clothes
- set a good example for your children and your friends

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TakeCharge

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Should I talk to my health care provider before starting an exercise program?

Most people do not need to see their health care provider before getting physically active. If you have heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis (weak bones), or obesity, talk to your health care provider before starting a vigorous physical activity program.

You do not need to talk to your provider before you start a less intense activity like walking. If you have been inactive for some time, plan to

walk at least twice a week for a month. Once you meet this goal, add another day or make your walk longer.

How much physical activity do I need?

Regular physical activity can be fun and help you feel great. To improve your health, aim for at least 150 minutes per week (30 minutes a day on 5 days) of moderately intense aerobic activity. This type of aerobic activity, like brisk walking or dancing, speeds up your heart rate and breathing. To lose weight and keep it off,

you may need more: Aim for 300 minutes per week (an hour a day for 5 days).

On at least 2 days per week, also try activities that strengthen your muscles. Examples include heavy gardening (digging and shoveling) and exercises that use hand weights.

For best results, spread out the physical activity throughout the week. Even 10 minutes at a time counts! 💡

How can I handle barriers to becoming more physically active?

Adding more physical activity to your life may seem a challenge. Here are some common barriers and solutions.

"I don't have time for physical activity."

You can "sneak" it into your day a few minutes at a time. Get started by making these small changes in your daily routine:

- Add three 10-minute walks to your day, if you can do so safely near your work or home.
- Take regular breaks from sitting at the computer or watching TV. Get up, move,

and stretch by lifting your hands up over your head. Twist side to side.

- Schedule your workouts as you would a hair or work appointment and stick to your plan.
- Start taking the stairs instead of the elevator whenever you have the option (be sure the stairs are well lit).
- If your job requires a lot of sitting, add a walk around the block to one of your daily breaks.



"It's too expensive."

There are ways to be active that are free or lower in cost. You can:

- Check out programs that may be offered at your workplace or local place of worship, like dance classes or walking programs.
- Find a local park or school track where you can walk or run.
- Walk in a mall or a free museum.

"Physical activity is a chore."

It can be fun!

- Do things you enjoy, like biking, gardening, playing sports, or swimming.

- Get a friend to try out a dance class with you. Walk or take an exercise class with a friend or a group. This way, you can cheer each other on, have company, and feel safer when you are outdoors.
- Use your daily workouts as time-outs just for yourself.
- Enjoy friendly competition with family and friends by setting a weight-loss challenge.
- Give your workouts more meaning by setting goals to do a walk or run for a cause you support.





ToYourHealth

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

A Pain in the Back

Preventing & Treating Low Back Pain



Warmer spring weather lures you outside for heavy yard work, now is a good time to learn about how to prevent and treat low back pain. Four out of every five people have had low back pain at one time or another. With symptoms ranging from a dull ache to absolute agony, low back pain can put your life on hold. In fact, it's second only to the common cold in causing missed work days for adults under age 45.

Most low back pain clears up in a few days or weeks with a combination of rest, appropriate exercise, and over-the-counter pain medicines. But pain that persists for more than three months-chronic back pain-is more difficult to treat, in part because there are many different possible causes.

The lower, or lumbar, spine is a complex structure made up of powerful muscles, ligaments, bones, and joints. It provides the strength for standing, walking,

lifting and other activities, and allows the body to turn, twist, and bend.

What Causes Back Pain?

Back pain can be caused by a number of things, from sports injuries and other damage to simple wear and tear. If muscles are poorly conditioned or overworked, they are more easily strained. Someone who works all week at a desk, for example, can strain their back muscles doing heavy yard work on the weekend. Likewise, if the ligaments that help stabilize the low back are weak from inactivity or stiff from overuse, a sudden wrenching movement can cause a ligament sprain.

Aging can also bring low back pain. Bones lose strength over time. In someone with osteoporosis, the bones of the lumbar vertebrae can break or compress in a fall or even during some everyday activities. Arthritis can inflame joints, causing pain and

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stiffness. And “slipped disks,” in which the rubbery cartilage between disks bulge outward, can press against the spinal nerves to cause pain.

How To Keep Your Back Healthy

Keeping your back healthy is the best way to prevent low back injury. There are several practical things you can do:

- **Don't try to lift objects too heavy for you.** Lift by bending your knees, not your back; keep your back straight and your head down and in line with your back. Keep the object close to your body, and don't twist when lifting.
- **Regular, low-impact exercises like walking, swimming, or stationary bike riding 30 minutes a day can increase muscle strength and flexibility.** Yoga can also help stretch and strengthen muscles and improve posture. Always stretch before exercise or other strenuous physical activity to prevent back injury.
- **Try to practice good posture.** Your back supports your weight most easily when it is straight. Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes. When standing, keep your weight balanced on both feet. Keep your shoulders back and don't slouch.
- **When sitting, try to use a chair with good lower back support.** A pillow or rolled-up towel placed behind the small of your back might help. Make sure your work surfaces, like your keyboard, are at a comfortable height. If you have to sit for a long period of time, rest your feet on a low stool or a stack of books. Switch sitting positions often, and walk around the office and gently stretch your muscles every so often to relieve tension.
- **Sleeping on a firm surface on your side helps your back.**
- **Eat a healthy diet with enough calcium, phosphorus, and vitamin D to help promote new bone growth.**
- **Keep extra weight off your waistline, where it can strain your lower back.**
- **If you smoke, quit; smoking reduces blood flow to the lower spine and causes the spinal discs to degenerate.**

