



Food Safety in College

Cooking in college for some students consists of ramen noodles and easy mac, but for others the opportunity to experiment away from home is just the beginning! Whether you are making a classic microwave meal or a gourmet three-course selection, food safety rules remain the same.



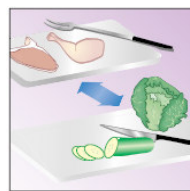
The 4 Simple Steps to Food Safety

Clean.



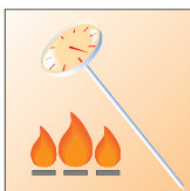
Wash hands and surfaces often. When washing hands, use warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, countertops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before going to the next food. Use towels to clean kitchen surfaces; paper towels should be throw out after each use, whereas cloth towels should be washed often in the hot cycle of the washing machine.

Separate.



Separate raw meat, poultry and egg products from cooked foods to avoid cross-contamination. Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate board for raw meat, poultry or seafood. Always use a plastic cutting board instead of a wooden board for raw products. Never place cooked food back on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry or seafood.

Cook.



Raw meat, poultry and egg products need to be cooked thoroughly. Marinade used on raw food should not be used for cooked food unless it is boiled first. Use a food thermometer to ensure foods have reached a high enough temperature to kill any harmful bacteria that might be present. When cooking in a microwave, make sure there are no cold spots. For best results, cover food, stir and rotate for even cooking.

Chill.

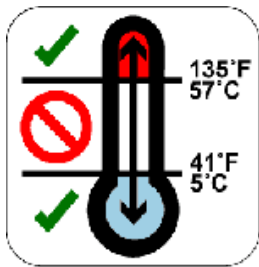


Refrigerate all perishable foods promptly. Refrigerators should be kept at 40°F or below. Refrigerate or freeze perishable prepared foods and leftovers with two hours of purchase or use. Separate large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for cooling.

Defrosting Do's & Don'ts

Safely defrosted food using one of these three methods:

- **Refrigerator.** Defrost food in the refrigerator. This is the safest method for all foods.
- **Running Cold Water.** In airtight packaging, defrost meat, poultry or seafood in running cold water.
- **Microwave.** Defrost food in the microwave on a low heat when cooking the item immediately.



Never defrost food at room temperature. Food left out at room temperature longer than two hours may enter the Danger Zone – the unsafe temperature range when bacteria multiplies rapidly, between 41°F – 135°F.

Microwave Cooking—FAQs

Q. When I microwave the food in the dorm according to the package's instructions, it's still partly frozen. Why doesn't it get hot enough?

A. In a large building like a dorm, electrical equipment such as computers, mini fridges, and hair dryers compete for current and reduce the electrical wattage of a microwave. To compensate, set the microwave for the maximum time given in the instructions. Cover foods during cooking and remember to stir or rearrange food and rotate the dish. Allow for standing time. The food continues to cook during this period.

Q. What containers are safe for microwaving foods?

A. Plastic cold-storage containers such as margarine tubs, take-out containers or other one-time use containers should not be used in microwave ovens. These containers can warp or melt, and may causing harmful chemicals to migrate into the food. Microwave plastic wraps, wax paper, cooking bags, parchment paper, and white microwave-safe paper towels should be safe to use. Do not let plastic wrap touch foods during microwaving.

Q. How do you thaw frozen foods in the microwave safely?

A. Remove food from packaging before defrosting. Do not use foam trays and plastic wraps because they are not heat stable at high temperatures. Melting or warping may cause harmful chemicals to migrate into food. Cook meat, poultry, egg casseroles, and fish immediately after defrosting in the microwave oven because some areas of the frozen food may begin to cook during the defrosting time. Do not hold partially cooked food to cook later.

Safe cooking temperatures	
Internal temperature	
Ground Meat & Meat Mixtures	
Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	160°F
Turkey, Chicken	165°F
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb	
Medium Rare	145°F
Medium	160°F
Well Done	170°F
Poultry	
Chicken & Turkey, whole	180°F
Poultry breasts, roast	170°F
Poultry thighs, wings	180°F
Duck & Goose	180°F
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165°F
Fresh Pork	
Medium	160°F
Well Done	170°F
Ham	
Fresh (raw)	160°F
Pre-cooked (to reheat)	140°F
Eggs & Egg Dishes	
Eggs	Cook until yolk & white are firm
Egg dishes	160°F
Seafood	
Fin Fish	145°F
or flesh is opaque & separates easily with fork	
Shrimp, Lobster & Crabs	Shells red & flesh pearly & opaque
Clams, Oysters & Mussels	Shells are open
Leftovers & Casseroles	165°F