



Food-Borne Illness

Food-borne illness refers to an illness that comes from eating contaminated food. The onset of symptoms may occur within minutes to weeks and often presents itself as flu-like symptoms, as the ill person may experience symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever. Because the symptoms are often flu-like, many people may not recognize that the illness is caused by harmful bacteria or other germs in food.

Everyone is at risk for getting a foodborne illness. However, some people are at greater risk for experiencing a more serious illness or even death should they get a foodborne illness. Those at greater risk are infants, young children, pregnant women and their unborn babies, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems.

To help prevent foodborne illness follow these 4 simple steps at home: clean, separate, cook, and chill.

1. **Clean:** *Wash hands and surfaces often.* Use warm water and soap.
2. **Separate:** *Don't cross-contaminate.* Use separate cutting boards and plates for produce and for meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.
3. **Cook:** *Cook to the right temperature.* Use a meat thermometer. Cook meats to 140° and poultry to 165°.
4. **Chill:** *Refrigerate promptly.* Set refrigerator to 40° or below.

