

News Release  
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## **Food Safety Myths**

Last week I shared the first five food safety myths from [fightback.org](http://fightback.org) and I promised to share the other five this week. Since this weekend may involve extra food preparation and possibly picnics, it is so important to keep food safety at the forefront of our holiday.

MYTH #6: Freezing food kills harmful bacteria that can cause food poisoning. FACT: Bacteria can survive freezing temperatures. Freezing is not a method for making food safe to eat. When food is thawed, bacteria can still be present and may begin to multiply. Cooking food to the proper internal temperature is the best way to kill harmful bacteria. Use a thermometer to measure the temperature of cooked foods.

MYTH #7: Putting chicken in a colander and rinsing it with water will remove bacteria like Salmonella. FACT: Rinsing chicken in a colander will not remove bacteria. In fact, it can spread raw juices around your sink, onto your counter tops, and onto ready-to-eat foods. Bacteria in raw meat and poultry can only be killed when cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature, which for poultry is 165°F, as measured by a food thermometer. Save yourself the messiness of rinsing raw poultry. It is not a safety step and can cause cross-contamination! Always use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of your food.

MYTH #8: Only kids eat raw cookie dough and cake batter. If we just keep kids away from the raw products when adults are baking, there won't be a problem! FACT: Just a lick can make you sick! No one of any age should eat raw cookie dough or cake batter because it could contain germs that cause illness. Whether it's pre-packaged or homemade, the heat from baking is required to kill germs that might be in the raw ingredients. The finished, baked, product is far safer — and tastes even better! And remember,

kids who eat raw cookie dough and cake batter are at greater risk of getting food poisoning than most adults are.

MYTH #9: Once a hamburger turns brown in the middle, it is cooked to a safe internal temperature.

FACT: You cannot use visual cues to determine whether food has been cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature. The ONLY way to know that food has been cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature is to use a food thermometer. Ground meat should be cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature of 160 °F, as measured by a food thermometer.

MYTH #10: If I microwave food, the microwaves kill the bacteria, so the food is safe. FACT: Microwaves aren't what kill bacteria. It's the heat generated by microwaves that kills bacteria in foods. Microwave ovens are great time-savers and will kill bacteria in foods when heated to a safe internal temperature. However, foods can cook unevenly because they may be shaped irregularly or vary in thickness. Even microwave ovens equipped with a turntable can cook unevenly and leave cold spots in food, where harmful bacteria can survive. Be sure to follow package instructions and rotate and stir foods during the cooking process, if the instructions call for it. Observe any stand times as called for in the directions. Check the temperature of microwaved foods with a food thermometer in several spots.

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