

Food Safety

HELPFUL HINTS FROM EXPERTS

Safely Handling Ground Meat and Poultry

(NAPSA)—There's good news from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Bacteria on meat and poultry are declining thanks to new food safety technologies. But food safety experts say it's always smart to assume bacteria may be present and handle meat and poultry with this in mind.

By following a few simple rules, you can ensure that meat and poultry are safe—all the way to the table.

Cool it!

Ground meat and poultry are more perishable than most foods, so bacteria can multiply more rapidly.

When shopping, put meat and poultry in your cart last. Transport them home quickly and if your trip will take more than an hour, bring along a cooler.

Keep the refrigerator set at 40° F or below and freezers set at 0° F or below. Defrost in the refrigerator or microwave to prevent bacterial growth.

Store it!

The shelf life for uncooked ground meat and poultry is one to two days; three to four days once cooked.

In a freezer set at 0° F or less, uncooked meat or poultry may be stored for three to four months. Cooked meat and poultry may be stored for up to four months.

Clean it!

Keep everything clean—hands, utensils, counters, cutting boards and sinks—to ensure that your food stays as safe as possible.



It's safe to assume bacteria is present and handle and cook food accordingly.

Separate it!

Cross-contaminating raw and cooked foods can cause a major kitchen calamity. Take the following preventive steps:

- Do not let raw meat and poultry juices touch ready-to-eat foods.

Cook it!

- Do not put cooked foods on a plate that held raw meat or poultry.

- It's important to cook meat and poultry thoroughly and check the temperature with an instant-read thermometer. Cook ground meat to 160° F and ground poultry to 165° F.

For a free brochure titled "A Consumer Guide to Safe Handling of Ground Meat and Poultry," send a SASE to: Free Safe Handling Brochure, 1150 Connecticut Ave., 12th Floor, Washington, DC 20036 or download the brochure from www.meatsafety.org.