

# Food Safety for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS

## Why is food safety so important?

- You can protect yourself from many infections by preparing food properly
- Meat, poultry and fish can make you sick if they are raw, undercooked or stored improperly
- Food can carry germs that cause illness. Germs in food may cause serious infections in people living with HIV. Some of the bacteria include Salmonella, Campylobacter, Listeria and Cryptosporidium. They can cause diarrhea, upset stomach, vomiting, muscle cramps, fever, headache, bloodstream infection, meningitis or encephalitis.

## Do only people with HIV or compromised immune systems get these food-borne illnesses?

- No, they can occur in anyone. However, these illnesses are much more common in people with HIV and compromised immune systems.
- Also, the diarrhea and nausea are often much worse and more difficult to treat in people with HIV. These illnesses are also more likely to cause serious problems in people with HIV. People with HIV also have a harder time recovering fully from these illnesses.

## If I have HIV, can I eat meat, poultry and fish?

- Yes, meat, poultry and fish can make you sick only if they are raw, undercooked, or spoiled. To avoid these illnesses:
- Cook all meat and poultry until they are no longer pink in the middle. If you use a meat thermometer, the temperature inside the meat or poultry should be over 165 degrees F. Fish should be cooked until it is flaky.
- After handling raw meat, poultry and fish, wash your hands well with soap and water before you touch other food.
- Thoroughly wash cutting boards, cooking utensils and countertops with soap and hot water after they have had contact with raw meat, poultry or fish.

- Do not let uncooked meat, poultry, or fish or their juices touch other food or each other.
- Do not let meat, poultry or fish sit at room temperature for more than a few minutes. Keep them refrigerated.
- Eat or drink only pasteurized milk or dairy products.

## Can I eat eggs if I have HIV?

- Yes. Eggs are safe to eat if they are well cooked. Cook eggs until the yolks and white are solid, not runny. Do not eat foods that may contain raw eggs such as hollandaise sauce, cookie dough, home-made mayonnaise and Caesar salad dressing. If you prepare these foods at home, use pasteurized eggs instead of eggs in the shell.

## Can I eat raw fruits and vegetables?

- Yes. Raw fruits and vegetables are safe to eat if you wash them carefully first. Wash and then peel fruit you will eat raw. Eating raw alfalfa sprouts and tomatoes can cause illness, but washing them well can reduce your risk.

## What should I do when shopping for food?

- Read food labels carefully. Be sure that all dairy products that you purchase have been pasteurized. Do not buy any food that contains raw or undercooked meat or eggs if it is meant to be eaten raw. Be sure that the “sell by” date has not passed.
- Put packaged meat, poultry, or fish in separate plastic bags to prevent their juices from dripping.
- Do not buy food that has been displayed in unsafe or unclean conditions. Examples include meat that is allowed to sit without refrigeration or cooked shrimp that is displayed with raw shrimp.
- After shopping, put cold and frozen foods into your refrigerator or freezer immediately. Don't leave food sitting in the car. Keeping cold and frozen food out of refrigeration for even a short time can give germs a chance to grow.

## Food Safety for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS *continued*

### Is it safe for me to eat in restaurants?

- Yes. Like grocery stores, restaurants follow guidelines for cleanliness and good hygiene set by the health department. However, you should follow these general rules in restaurants:
- Order all food well done. If meat is served pink or bloody, send it back to the kitchen for more cooking. Fish should be flaky, not rubbery, when you cut it.
- Order fried eggs cooked on both sides. Avoid eggs that are “sunny-side up.” Scrambled eggs should be cooked until they are not runny. Do not order foods that may contain raw eggs, such as Caesar salad or hollandaise sauce. If you aren’t sure about the ingredients in a dish, ask your waiter before you order.
- Do not order any raw or lightly steamed fish or shellfish, such as oysters, clams, mussels, sushi, or sashimi. All fresh fish should be cooked until done.

### Proper internal temperatures and keeping your perishable food items

FOOD ITEM	TEMP
<b>Beef, Lamb, Veal (ground products)</b>	
Hamburger (patties, meatballs, etc..)	160
<b>Beef, Lamb, Veal (non-ground products)</b>	145
Roast/steaks, medium-rare	145
Roasts/steaks, medium	160
Roasts/steaks, well-done	170
<b>Poultry</b>	
Ground chicken, ground turkey	165
Whole chicken, whole turkey	180
Boneless turkey roasts	170
Poultry breast and roast	170
Poultry thighs, wings and drumstick	180
Duck, goose	180
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165
<b>Pork (all cuts and ground)</b>	
Medium	160
Well-done	170
Fresh, raw ham	160
Fully cooked ham, to reheat	140
<b>Egg dishes, casseroles</b>	160
<b>Leftovers, reheated</b>	165

### Safe Food Storage

- Make sure to buy a thermometer and check your refrigerator and freezer temperatures regularly.
- Look at the storage information on package labels, or refer to the guidelines for storing perishable items listed in the tables to the left.
- Refrigerate raw meat and poultry on a covered plate on the bottom shelf to keep juices from dripping onto other foods or refrigerator shelves.
- Store eggs in the refrigerator and keep them in their carton. Place them in the center of the refrigerator and not in the refrigerator door.
- Store your canned foods in a dry and cool place. Make sure you check the “use-by” date on every can before you open it.
- If a package or can looks physically altered, or has an odd odor or feel, throw it away even if the “use-by” or “sell-by” date has not passed.
- Throw out fruits or vegetable if they develop bruises, soft spots, dents or mold.
- Wash all of your fruits and vegetables in cool water before storing them. Use a soft vegetable brush and try to avoid purchasing fruits and vegetables that are difficult to properly wash, such as raspberries, sprouts, lettuce or other leafy greens.
- And remember....

### When in doubt, throw it out!

Perishable Food Item	Keeps Up To
<b>Cooked fresh vegetables</b>	3-4 days
<b>Cooked pasta</b>	3-5 days
<b>Cooked rice</b>	1 week
<b>Deli counter meats</b>	5 days
<b>Meat:</b>	
Ham, cooked and sliced	3-4 days
Hot dogs, opened	1 week
Lunch meats, pre-packaged, opened	3-5 days
Cooked beef, pork, poultry, fish and meat dishes, casseroles	3-4 days
Cooked patties and nuggets, gravy and broth	1-2 days
<b>Seafood, cooked</b>	2 days
<b>Soups and stews</b>	3-4 days
<b>Stuffing</b>	1-2 days

## Food Safety for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS *continued*

### **Wash your hands more often before and after you...**

- Handle or prepare food
- Touch raw food, especially meats
- Switch food preparation tasks
- Touch eggs and egg-rich foods
- Use the restroom
- Cough or sneeze
- Handle garbage, dirty dishes
- Smoke a cigarette
- Pet animals
- Use the phone
- Touch face, hair, body other people
- Touch a cut or sore
- Clear or touch dirty laundry

### **And don't forget surfaces...**

- Keep kitchen surfaces such as appliances, counter-tops, cutting boards and utensils clean with hot, soapy water
- A smelly dishcloth, towel or sponge is a sure sign that bacteria is growing!