

[IMAGE]

Safety First

By Editorial Staff

For most families, safety is a basic priority when cooking meals. But recent news on *E. coli* outbreaks in meats and vegetables, contamination of beef and food recalls have caused some concern and confusion about what foods to eat and how to prepare them.

In response to questions on proper food preparation and handling techniques, the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation has offered the following food safety tips:

- To reduce exposure to pesticides, select produce that is free of dirt, cuts, insect holes or other signs of spoilage, and wash produce in water (not soap), scrub its skin or peel its outer leaves.
- Put packages of raw meat, poultry or fish in a shallow pan before refrigerating so their juices won't drip and contaminate other food.

Tomato being cleaned by water. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark

- Reheat sauces, marinades, soups and gravy to a rolling boil. Heat other leftovers thoroughly to a minimum internal temperature of 165 F.
- In the event of a power outage, keep on hand a few days worth of ready-to-eat foods which do not require heating or cooling.

"Common sense should always prevail when it comes to food preparation," says Danielle Schor, senior vice president of food safety at the IFIC. "One additional tip consumers should always keep in mind is that if they have any doubts about the way a food looks or smells, they should throw it out."

So don't be afraid to keep enjoying your favorite foods. Just remember: Safety first.

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