

[IMAGE]

When Food Makes You Sick

Listeria. Salmonella. Outbreak. You might recognize these three words from recent headlines. They are indicators of a growing number of food-borne illnesses that have been plaguing hundreds of people around the country. Bacteria in food is very common, but outbreaks seem to take the spotlight for the large number of people they make sick. We cannot always control what bacteria lies in our food, but we can take preventative measures to ensure we don't fall prey to food-borne illnesses in the future. Here are five ways you can protect your health:

- Wash your fresh fruits and vegetables - Many packages of fruits and vegetables often note they are sold "pre-washed" or "triple-washed" but one can never be too sure. When you purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, make sure to wash them thoroughly and invest in a vegetable washing soak if possible. This can ensure that if you cook or make a salad with vegetables and fruits, it is free of toxins and possible lingering bacteria.
- Watch your uncooked poultry and handle carefully - When you buy poultry, you need make sure you are handling it out of the packaging in a sanitary space; that means cleaning off counters and using a cutting board if possible. Also, make sure to wash your hands before handling poultry. Once you are ready to prepare it, make sure it does not come into contact with other foods you may have laying around and always make sure to wipe off and clean the space the poultry was at very thoroughly.
- food preparation - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Check dates - With fresh meats and vegetables, always make sure to check dates of expiration in case the food you buy might have had too long of a shelf life and acquired unnecessary bacteria.
- Clean your cooking utensils - When cooking fresh meats or vegetables, make sure to use only clean utensils. This will ensure you are not picking up bacteria from other surfaces.
- Do not leave food out for too long - Make sure to cook your open packages of food right away. Poultry and seafood should not be left out for too long.

Make sure you are aware of recent outbreaks and take extra precaution with your food purchases. It could save your life.

Recent headlines: "Boston Salads And Prepared Foods Issues Voluntarily Recall Over Listeria Concerns,"
"Chicken Sprouts Salmonella Outbreak."

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