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Food Safety - True or False Quiz: Test Your Knowledge

Whether you are preparing, cooking or storing food, food safety is a number one priority. Take the food safety challenge to test your knowledge on keeping foods safe!

True or False?

1. It's okay to thaw perishable food like frozen chicken and beef on the kitchen counter or in the sink.
2. Foods should be put away in the fridge or freezer within two hours.
3. Milk and eggs can be stored in the refrigerator door.
4. One of the best ways to prevent contaminating foods is to wash your hands.
5. You can tell if food is still safe to eat by smelling it.
6. Keep raw foods and cooked foods separate.
7. Fruits and vegetables should be washed, even if you are peeling them.
8. The temperature at which you cook leftovers doesn't matter because it's already cooked.
9. Steaks can be eaten rare.
10. Pregnant women, infants, seniors and people with a weakened immune system are at greater risk of developing foodborne illness.

1. It's okay to thaw perishable food like frozen chicken and beef on the kitchen counter or in the sink.

FALSE: Perishable food like frozen chicken and beef should **not** be thawed at room temperature. This is because the outside of the food may reach the danger zone (above 4°C/40°F) before the inside of the food is thawed. Thawing perishable food at room temperature increases your risk of food borne illness.

There are three safe ways to defrost food:

- **In the refrigerator:** Any frozen food can safely be thawed in the refrigerator. When thawing raw meat, put it in a container to prevent juices from dripping and contaminating other foods.
- **In cold water:** Place food in a leak proof plastic bag and put it in cold water. Make sure the water stays cold by changing it every 30 minutes. Once the food is thawed, cook it right away.
- **In the microwave:** Use plastic containers and wraps in the microwave that have been labelled as "microwaves safe" or use glass. Follow instructions on your microwave to find out the time needed to defrost your food. Cut larger pieces of food into smaller

pieces so that they can be heated evenly. If bacteria are present, they may grow quickly in unevenly heated areas that are above 4°C/40°F and below 60°C/140°F.

2. Foods should be put away in the fridge or freezer within two hours.

TRUE: It is important to refrigerate or freeze food within two hours or less. This slows down growth of any bacteria or bacterial spores that might be present. Follow these tips for leftovers:

- Very hot items can first be cooled at room temperature. Put the food in a shallow dish so it cools more quickly.
- Once cooled, refrigerate all leftovers promptly so that they continue to cool quickly. Use a lid, aluminum foil or cling wrap to cover the food.
- Avoid overstocking your refrigerator to allow cool air to circulate freely.

3. Milk and eggs can be stored in the refrigerator door.

FALSE: Do not place milk or eggs in the refrigerator door. To keep eggs at their freshest, store them in their original carton.

4. One of the best ways to prevent contaminating foods is to wash your hands.

TRUE: Wash your hands before handling food. Also wash your hands after handling raw meat and seafood, after using the washroom, after changing diapers, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing and after touching pets. By doing this, you will avoid spreading germs when you touch other things around your home.

Rub your hands together using soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Wash the skin between your fingers and the backs of your hands. Dry your hands thoroughly, preferably with a single use towel.

Use a fingernail brush to make sure that under and around your fingernails are thoroughly cleaned, especially after using the washroom or changing diapers.

5. You can tell if food is still safe to eat by smelling it.

FALSE: You can't tell if a food is contaminated with harmful bacteria by looking at it, smelling it or tasting it. When in doubt - throw it out!

6. Keep raw foods and cooked foods separate.

TRUE: It's important to keep raw meat, poultry and seafood in separate containers and away from cooked foods. Use separate utensils for handling raw foods and cooked foods. When food is cooked, serve it on a clean plate and use clean utensils to avoid cross contamination.

It's also a good idea to keep cutting boards for raw and cooked foods separate. Make sure you

properly clean and sanitize cutting boards used for raw meats and seafood once you're done using them.

Simple sanitizing steps:

- Combine 5 mL (about 1 teaspoon) of bleach with 750 mL (3 cups) of water.
- First clean countertops, cutting boards and utensils with hot, soapy water and rinse with clean water. Use a clean cloth or towel dipped in the sanitizer, wring it out, wipe the surface and air dry.

7. Fruits and vegetables should be washed, even if you're peeling them.

TRUE: Always wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under cool running water, even if you are planning on peeling them. Washing squash, melons, pineapple and oranges, before peeling or cutting then helps prevent the spread of bacteria from the surface to your hands or the flesh inside. Use a clean produce brush to scrub foods that have firm, rough surfaces like melons or potatoes. There is no need to buy produce cleaners. Cut away any damaged or bruised areas since harmful bacteria, moulds or their toxins can be present.

8. The temperature at which you cook leftovers doesn't matter because it's already cooked.

FALSE: You should quickly reheat leftovers to a safe internal temperature of 74°C (165°F). Use a digital food thermometer to check that the temperature has been reached. You can buy a food thermometer at any department store or kitchenware shop.

9. Steaks can be eaten rare.

TRUE: It is safe to eat steaks rare or medium-rare as long as the internal temperature reaches 63°C (145°F). Bacteria are present on the surface of the meat and not on the inside. Ground beef, on the other hand, has to be cooked all the way through to an internal temperature of 71°C (160°F). Use a digital food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of your burger or meatballs.

10. Pregnant women, infants, seniors and people with a weakened immune system are at greater risk of developing foodborne illness.

TRUE: Pregnant women, infants, seniors and people with weakened immune systems are at greater risk for foodborne illness. These groups of people should ensure that they are handling food safely. In particular meats, poultry, fish and shellfish should be cooked to a safe internal temperature. Use a digital food thermometer to be sure.

Visit www.NutritionMonth2023.ca for more on how to connect with a dietitian and for trusted food and nutrition information.