

How to Follow Food Safety At Home and When Dining Out

It is important to keep in mind that when following the practices of food safety both at home and while dining out that it all falls back into the practices we learned growing up, safety first. That being said, one important factor to keep in mind is that you hold the key to food safety.

While at home, there are a few things that you can practice to ensure that you are safely consuming and preparing that food.

At Home

- 1. Know your product.** When shopping for whatever items it is you wish to cook, always start with washing your hands and donning gloves, where and when necessary
- 2. Do not cross contaminate.** This simply means that as you are preparing your meal, prepare each portion individually. For example, you would not want to mix fresh raw broccoli with fresh raw chicken
- 3. Cook all goods to desired temperatures.** This means knowing where the food safety threshold is for meat and vegetable items. For instance, for chicken to be safe it must be cooked to an internal temperature of no less than 165 degrees
- 4. Consider food allergies.** One way to ensure the safety of yourself and others is to prepare and cook the foods separately from any other items you may be cooking. This will prevent any cross contamination, which is a very common cause of food related illness
- 5. Store foods properly.** Be sure that you are preparing and/or freezing foods within the correct period to avoid expiration

When Dining Out

- 1. Ensure proper hygiene.** Be sure you are washing your hands and making sure that you take the proper steps to protect yourself
- 2. When entering any food establishment,** know that they have local regulatory controls and are inspected regularly
- 3. Consider the food defense acronym** known as A.L.E.R.T. It stands for Alert, Look, Employees, Reports, and Threat. This is a common practice in kitchens and is used to ensure customer safety
- 4. Read the menus.** Most food establishments when dining out indicate on the menus they give you whether or not the food item is something that could cause allergic reactions
- 5. Ask questions.** If you are concerned about a particular menu item, how it is prepared, what is in it, etc... the restaurant can provide you everything you need to know to feel safe

