

According to the Center for Disease Control, "Each year, 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people) gets sick from and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases. Reducing foodborne illness by just 10% would keep 5 million Americans from getting sick each year. Preventing a single fatal case of [E. coli](#) O157 infection would save an estimated \$7 million."

There are many simple practices you can put in place to protect your family from foodborne diseases. Here are some recommendations from the CDC:

What can consumers do to protect themselves from foodborne illness?

A few simple precautions can reduce the risk of foodborne diseases:

- [COOK](#): meat, poultry and eggs thoroughly.
 - Using a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of meat is a good way to be sure that it is cooked sufficiently to kill bacteria.
 - Eggs should be cooked until the yolk is firm.
- [SEPARATE](#): Don't cross-contaminate one food with another.
 - Avoid cross-contaminating foods by washing hands, utensils, and cutting boards after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry and before they touch another food.
 - Put cooked meat on a clean platter, rather back on one that held the raw meat.
- [CHILL](#): Refrigerate leftovers promptly.
 - Bacteria can grow quickly at room temperature, so refrigerate leftover foods if they are not going to be eaten within 4 hours.
 - Large volumes of food will cool more quickly if they are divided into several shallow containers for refrigeration.
- [CLEAN](#): Wash produce.
 - Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables in running tap water to remove visible dirt and grime.
 - Remove and discard the outermost leaves of a head of lettuce or cabbage.
 - Because bacteria can grow well on the cut surface of fruit or vegetable, be careful not to contaminate these foods while slicing them up on the cutting board, and avoid leaving cut produce at room temperature for many hours.
 - Don't be a source of foodborne illness yourself.
 - Wash your hands with soap and water before preparing food.
 - Avoid preparing food for others if you yourself have a diarrheal illness.
 - Changing a baby's diaper while preparing food is a bad idea that can easily spread illness.

To find more information about food safety, you can go to the resources below.

<http://fsrio.nal.usda.gov/food-preparation-and-handling-0>

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/>

<http://www.nutrition.gov/shopping-cooking-meal-planning/food-preparation-and-safety>

<http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/>