

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Helping to cook may be very appealing and fun for children, but it's important that they learn how to keep foods safe to eat and how to use the kitchen safely. Remind children that the best cooks are safe cooks. As the "adult helper", you play an important role in modeling and helping your children learn how to handle foods safely and to be safe in the kitchen. So, before they roll up their sleeves, review the following tips with your young chefs.



KEEPING YOUR FOOD SAFE

Start clean and stay clean!

- This rule applies to everything – hands, utensils, equipment, food and work surfaces.
- To keep foods safe to eat, always begin with clean hands. Wash your hands and teach children to wash their hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds immediately before beginning any recipes, when changing food tasks and when food preparation is completed.
- Rinse all fruits and vegetables before eating or preparing them.

Keep foods apart

- Use one cutting board for raw meat, poultry and fish, and another for fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Place cooked foods on a clean dish, one that has not held raw foods.
- Don't allow raw meat juices to drip on cooked foods or raw fruits and vegetables.

Cook foods thoroughly!

- Raw cookie dough and cake batters contain raw eggs and should not be eaten. The eggs may contain harmful bacteria that can make you sick.

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- Raw eggs, fish, poultry and meat must be cooked well to kill harmful bacteria. Use a clean thermometer to check the internal temperature of the foods.

Keep it cold!

- Refrigerate leftovers quickly. Don't allow food to sit at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- Never defrost food on the counter. Thaw food in the refrigerator or in cold water. It can also be thawed in the microwave, if it is going to be cooked immediately.

Help children to understand that spoiled foods can smell, look and taste normal, but that tasting spoiled foods can make them ill. If you or they have any doubts about a food's freshness, throw it out!

Make Safety the First Ingredient

Following basic kitchen safety rules will go a long way in avoiding cuts, burns, and falls in the kitchen. Children should be supervised closely when they are working with sharp knives, appliances, the stove or the oven. Even older children still require adult assistance and supervision because some appliances can be tricky to use. Review the following kitchen safety tips with your children:

- Avoid long or loose sleeves. Long hair should be tied back.
- Always use potholders or oven mitts to handle hot items. Remember, any food from the oven or microwave will be hot.
- Wipe up spills when they occur to prevent falls.
- Use electric appliances away from water. Unplug them when done.
- Handle sharp knives and kitchen scissors by the handles and point away from you when you are cutting.
- Turn saucepan and skillet handles toward the middle of the stove.
- Use only microwave-safe equipment in the microwave oven. Note: aluminum foil pans and some glass or pottery dishes can cause sparks.

Call the MSU Extension Office at 517/439-9301 with any questions.

Source: Michigan State University Extension, Wayne Co.