

Safe Food Preparation

Unsafe food causes many diseases and interferes with good nutrition. Our goal as leaders is to help families learn and use safe food preparation practices.

KEY POINTS

Food that is not prepared properly can be dangerous to our health.

It may contain bacteria, viruses, parasites, or chemicals that can lead to disease and even death. Young children are especially vulnerable.

Most foodborne illnesses can be prevented by using good habits of food preparation.

The World Health Organization gives five key actions to keep food safe:

1. Keep clean. Germs on hands and cooking utensils can get into food.

- Wash hands before, during, and after preparing food.
- Always wash hands after using the toilet.
- Wash work surfaces and cooking equipment.
- Keep animals and insects from touching food and work surfaces.

2. Separate raw and cooked. Raw meat, poultry, and seafood can contain dangerous microorganisms.

- Keep raw meat, fish, and poultry separate from other foods.
- Don't use the same knife or cutting surface for raw meats and other foods.

3. Cook thoroughly. Heat kills dangerous microorganisms.

- Cook foods thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood.
- Let foods like soups and stews boil before eating.

4. Keep food at safe temperatures. Dangerous microorganisms multiply at room temperature.

- Keep cooked food hot until it is eaten (60°C or 140°F).
- Don't keep cooked foods at room temperature for more than two hours.

5. Use safe water and foods. Spoiled foods and unclean water may contain dangerous microorganisms and chemicals.

- In cooking, use water that is safe to drink.
- Wash raw vegetables and unpeeled fruits before eating.



Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- Which safe food preparation practices do our members need to learn the most?
- What are the best ways to help members develop safe food preparation habits?



Inspiration from the Scriptures

The body is a precious gift from God. It is compared to a temple that houses our spirit (see 1 Corinthians 3:16). As we do what we can to prevent disease, we keep our bodies strong and show appreciation for this gift.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

- **Think about the different conditions in which your members live.** Is there safe drinking water nearby? Is there running water in the home? Is there a refrigerator or other means of cooling food? Think of ways to apply the key points in different circumstances.
 - For example, if families do not have a refrigerator, they could cook in smaller batches so there is no leftover food kept at room temperature until the next meal.
- **Hold a group activity.** Safe food preparation can be a good topic for a Relief Society activity mini-lesson. Here are a few ideas:
 - After presenting the key ideas, have a discussion. Ask the sisters for ideas about how to use the safe food preparation practices.
 - Demonstrate some of the good practices.
 - Encourage sisters to try one small improvement at a time.
- **Use safe food practices when preparing food together for a Church activity.**
- **Help members understand the importance of safe food preparation.** People may feel it's not necessary to change the way they have always done things. They may not realize that some illnesses they experience may be caused by food preparation habits.

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- Learn and use safe food preparation practices at home. That will make you better able to help others.
- Food safety can be a sensitive topic. People are often doing the best they know how. If you observe serious unsafe food practices in a home, withhold judgment and prayerfully help where you can. Take care that the family doesn't feel criticized.

Share the "Safe Food Preparation" handout with members.



Adapted from the WHO publication *Five Keys To Safer Food Manual* (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241594639>). See the poster on the last page of the manual.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about safe food preparation and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org

