

Food Safety

The recent recall of ground beef products produced by XL Foods Inc. has put the subject of food safety high on our radar. Most people instantly relate bacteria to something bad for you but in actuality there are many bacteria that help your body work properly.

E. coli is a food-borne bacterium that causes symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramps. In extreme cases, it can be fatal. The bacteria is commonly seen however outbreaks are rare.

E. coli lives inside our intestines, where it helps our body break down and digest the food we eat. The bacteria can also get into foods like beef and vegetables. How? Beef can contain E. coli because the bacteria often infect cattle. It can be in the meat that comes from the cattle and also in their poop also called manure. Manure is sometimes used for fertilizer, which is **Recommended temperatures for cooked foods:**

- ✓ 165°F (73.8°C) - Poultry
- ✓ 145°F (62.7°C) – Steaks, Roasts and Chops
- ✓ 160°F (71°C) - Ground beef, veal, pork and lamb
- ✓ 145°F (62.7°C) - Fish
- ✓ 160°F (71°C) – Egg dishes

how vegetables may get infected. It may also come from contaminated water that may have been used to irrigate the crops. E. coli bacteria can also travel from person to person, especially when infected adults and children don't wash their hands properly.

Keep Yourself Informed

The Canadian Government operates a website where you can find the most up to date product information. Select your province and click on the "recalls" link under the "health and safety" tab. There is also a wealth of other information as well.

www.consumerinformation.ca

Proper food storage and preparation protects against food borne illnesses such as E. coli, salmonella, campylobacter and listeria.

Buying

When buying meats, separate them from other items, especially produce. Check expiration dates and don't buy fish or meats that smell or look strange even if the expiration date is still acceptable. Avoid fruit with broken skin as bacteria can enter through the opening and contaminate the fruit.

Storage

Ensure your refrigerator temperature is set at 40°F (5°C) and your freezer is set to 0°F (-18°C). This will help keep any bacteria in your foods from multiplying. Avoid storing eggs in the door to ensure they keep at the proper temperature.

Preparation

Wash all fruits and vegetables with plain running water and scrub firm produce such as carrots, cucumbers or melons. Wash melons before eating to avoid carrying bacteria from the rind, to the knife, to the inside of the fruit. Wash your hands with hot water and soap before preparing foods and after handling raw meat, poultry, fish or egg products. Remember to keep meats and their juices away from other foods in the refrigerator and on countertops. It is wise to designate cutting boards and utensils for raw meat and never place cooked meat on platters where raw meat was holding. Never thaw your meats at room temperature. Use the refrigerator or microwave.

Clean Up

Ensure that your kitchen surfaces and hands are clean and sanitized to prevent the spread of bacteria. Leftovers should be refrigerated as soon as possible and consumed within 3 to 4 days.

Resources

mayoclinic.com
kidshealth.org
theglobeandmail.com

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Fun Food Facts!



Actually a fruit, it took a ruling by the Supreme Court in 1893 to make the tomato a vegetable.

Did You Know?



Avocado has the highest protein and oil content of all fruits, but most of this is the healthier unsaturated type

Celery requires more calories to eat and digest than it contains

Honey is the only edible food for humans that will never go bad

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