

Safe Food For Healthy Lives



Clean

- Wash hands and wipe down counter space with warm soapy water before and after cooking.
- Wash fruits and vegetables in cold water for a minute. Optional produce-specific soap can help further remove pesticides.



Separate

- Keep meats and poultry in separate containers in the freezer.
- Keep fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator.
- Use different cutting boards and utensils for raw meat, cooked meats, and fruits and veggies.



Cook

- Use a food thermometer to test the temperature of the meat.
- Cook ham, pork, and seafood until the food thermometer reads 145 degrees.
- Cook ground meat and poultry until the food thermometer reads 165 degrees.
- Leave meats in the oven for 3 minutes after cooking.



Chill

- Refrigerate meats within 2 hours of cooking.
- Eat refrigerated foods within 4 days of cooking them.
- Refrigerate eggs in the original cartons, away from the door.



Be cautious of:

Chemicals found in plastic

What are they?

Bisphenol-A and phthalates are chemicals used in food packaging and food containers.

Should I be concerned?

These chemicals prevent contamination and preserve food, but can also contribute to cancer, obesity, and problems with the reproductive system.

Recommendations

Stay away from packaging labeled with a "V," "PVC," "3," or "7." Instead, use plastic containers with the numbers "1," "4" or "5" or use ones made with safer materials like stainless steel or glass.

Pesticides

What are they?

Pesticides are substances or a mixture of substances used to get rid of pests.

Why are pesticides bad?

Research has linked pesticides to cancer, hormone disruption, cognitive problems, and behavioral problems.

Food preservatives

What are they?

Food preservatives are added to food to keep its texture and taste as well as increase its shelf-life.

Should I be concerned?

All preservatives are approved by the FDA, but can still affect your health. Nitrates, found in processed meats, in large quantities, can be cancerous. Some preservatives, mainly those found in acidic foods, may trigger asthma flare-ups and worsen allergies.

Recommendations

If possible, consider decreasing processed meats in your diet, and consider buying locally-produced foods whenever possible.

Artificial Sweeteners

What are they?

Man-made sugar substitutes that replace sucrose (sugar). They are often much sweeter than natural sugar.

Should I be concerned?

Artificial sweeteners can lead to bad habits for sweets, leading to weight gain or even diabetes. If consumed at an early age, there is some concern they can increase the risk of developing food allergies.

Recommendations

Unless directed by your child's pediatrician, try not to give artificial sweeteners such as Splenda, Sweet N' Low, and Equal to children. In adults, try to balance the use of artificial sweeteners and real sugar.

Antibiotics and Growth Hormones in Animal Products

What are they?

Products given to animals throughout their lives to keep them healthy and promote growth.

- Antibiotics
 - Help contain diseases in livestock.
 - Overuse can contribute to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
- Growth Hormones
 - Help animals to produce lean meat with less fat.
 - There is some concern that long-term exposure may lead to cancer and developmental issues in humans.

Recommendations

Consider buying organic products without antibiotics or growth hormones, and cook and clean food as outlined in 'At Home Rules.'

Red Meats

What is it?

Any meat that contains a higher concentration of myoglobin than "white meat," and is consequently red when raw.

What should I be concerned about?

In large quantities, may increase your risk for type 2 diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and strokes. In comparison to a vegetarian diet, red meats can lead to higher total cholesterol, weight (BMI), and glucose levels (diabetes).

Recommendations

Limit red meat consumption to once or twice a week and avoid processed meats.



Look for:

Locally Sourced Food

What is it?

Food that is grown and transported less than 400 miles, or within the same state.

Why does it matter?

Because it is transported a shorter distance, local food may be fresher, last longer, and be less likely to grow harmful bacteria. Local farms often use organic growing practices.

Recommendations

Grocery stores and farmer's markets carry a variety of local food products.

Organic food

What is it?

Organic food refers to foods that limit the number of chemicals they contain. Organic foods are produced through farming practices that only use natural substances. This means avoiding all artificial chemicals, hormones, antibiotics, and GMOs. However, there are few nutritional differences between organic and non-organic foods.

Is it recommended?

Yes, but not a necessity. They can be more expensive and not always available. Washing regular produce before eating can be a safe alternative.

The Children's Environmental Health Center of the Hudson Valley

- Clinical Consultations: We offer consultation services to any children and their families concerned about the potential impact of their environment on their child's health.
- Community Outreach: Our center's mission is to raise awareness in the community about the importance of keeping children away from environmental toxins and pollutants and how to minimize exposures.
- Research: Our center is committed to conducting vital research designed to improve our understanding of the role of the environment in children's health.
- Referrals and Medical Management: We receive many referrals from pediatricians and other healthcare providers, schools, and the government, and have access to the staff at Maria Fareri Children's Hospital to care for children with known or suspected exposure to environmental toxins.
- We are designated by NY State as a Center of Excellence in Children's Environmental Health, and as part of this network, we share expertise and coordinate with many experts around the state.