

# Healthy Aging: Food Safety for Older Adults

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## Why is This Population at Risk?

Adults at the age of 65 years or older are at an increased risk for complications of foodborne illness. Due to changes that occur within the body as we age, these changes make an elderly person at risk. A few changes that occur can be seen as the motility within the gastrointestinal tract, slows and allows bacteria to grow. The function of organs such as the liver and kidney does not function as efficiently and does not allow proper filtering of bad bacteria and toxins. Underlying health conditions such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, autoimmune diseases, diabetes, or kidney disease can also increase the risk of foodborne illness.

## How to Avoid Foodborne Illness Through Food Choice:

Food Type	HIGHER Risk	LOWER Risk
Meat and Poultry	Raw or uncooked meat and poultry	Meat and poultry cooked to a correct internal temperature: 145 → Roast and steak 160 → Ground meat 165 → Poultry
Seafood	Any (or containing) raw or undercooked fish or shellfish. Including: Refrigerated smoked fish Partially cooked seafood (shrimp and crab)	Seafood cooked to 145 degrees Previously cooked seafood heated up to 165 degrees
Milk	Unpasteurized (raw) milk	Pasteurized milk
Eggs	Foods that contain raw or undercooked eggs, including: Homemade Caesar salad dressings Homemade raw cookie dough Homemade eggnog	When cooking at home, cook with pasteurized eggs if the recipe calls for raw or undercooked eggs. When eating outside of the home, ask if the dish is prepared with pasteurized eggs.
Vegetables	Unwashed fresh vegetables	Washed fresh vegetables, including salads Cook vegetables
Cheese	Unpasteurized (raw) milk: feta, brie, blue-veined, queso fresco, camembert	Hard cheese, processed cheeses, cream cheese, mozzarella, soft cheeses that are clearly labeled "made from pasteurized milk"

## Safety Tips:

**Clean** → Surfaces, utensils, and hands

**Separate** → Raw meats, poultry, seafood from ready-to-eat foods during meal prep and in grocery cart

**Cook** → Use a food thermometer when cooking and reheating foods

**Chill** → Refrigerate/freeze any raw and prepared foods if not consuming immediately