



Diet Guidelines & Food Safety for Patients with Decreased Immunity

The purpose of this diet is to protect you from bacteria in foods that may be harmful to you when your immune system is decreased. Please follow these guidelines until your doctor instructs otherwise.

Type of Food	Avoid	Allowed
Meat and Poultry	Raw or undercooked meat or poultry Unpasteurized, refrigerated pâtés or meat spreads	Meat or poultry cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F Steaks and roasts can be cooked to 145°F Canned/shelf-stable pâtés or meat spreads
Seafood	Any raw/undercooked fish, shellfish, or seafood e.g., sushi (cooked or raw), sashimi Smoked fish that is not fully cooked Partially cooked seafood	Previously cooked seafood reheated to 165°F Canned fish and seafood Fresh seafood cooked to 145°F
Milk	Unpasteurized (raw) milk or dairy products	Pasteurized milk and dairy products (soymilk and other nondairy milk allowed if pasteurized)
Cheese	Soft cheeses made from unpasteurized (raw) milk, such as: Feta Brie Camembert Blue-veined Queso fresco	Hard cheeses Processed cheeses Cream cheese Mozzarella Soft cheeses that are clearly labeled “made from pasteurized milk”
Eggs	Foods that contain raw/undercooked eggs, such as homemade Caesar salad dressing, raw cookie dough, and eggnog	At home: Use pasteurized eggs/egg products When eating out: Ask if pasteurized eggs were used or order fully cooked eggs
Fruits and Vegetables	Unwashed fresh fruits and vegetables Pre-cut fresh fruit and vegetables Raw sprouts or raw mushrooms of any kind Fresh salsa	Washed fresh fruits and vegetables Canned, dried and frozen fruits and vegetables Bagged lettuce/vegetables must be rinsed prior to eating Canned or bottled salsa

Type of Food	Avoid	Allowed
Hot Dogs and Deli Items	Hot dogs, deli and luncheon meats that have not been reheated or cooked (do not eat straight out of the package) Pre-made salads from the deli (egg, ham, chicken, tuna)	Hot dogs, luncheon meats, and deli meats reheated or cooked to steaming hot or 165°F
Water and Ice	Well water unless filter removes <1 micron Well water unless using a reverse osmosis system (well water considered safe if boiled for at least 1 minute) Ice from restaurants Self-serve ice machines Bagged Ice	County or city water Commercially bottled water Ice made at home (unless well water) Ice from hospital and hospital patient pantry
Beverages	Fountain drinks Smoothies and vegetable drinks made in restaurants or juice bars Self-serve beverages and water from public facility (including water fountains) Iced beverages from restaurant	Soft drinks in a can or bottle Pasteurized fruit and vegetable juices Smoothies and vegetable drinks made at home Hot black coffee or hot tea from coffee shops/restaurants
Miscellaneous	Self-serve condiments Raw nuts/seeds Raw/unpasteurized honey and syrup	Condiments purchased for home use Individual sealed packages Baked/cooked nuts or seeds Pasteurized honey Baked goods Pasta, rice, cereals

Four Basic Steps to Food Safety

1. Clean: Wash hands and surfaces often

- **Wash hands in warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds** before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets.
- **Wash produce.** Rinse fruits and vegetables under running tap water and rub or use a soft scrub brush to clean off soil, etc. off firm-skinned fruits and vegetables, including those skins and rinds that are not eaten (e.g. bananas, oranges, lemons).
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water between the preparation of raw meat, poultry, and seafood products and preparation of any other food that will not be cooked (use plastic or glass cutting boards instead of wooden cutting boards).

- Use paper towels to clean kitchen surfaces and avoid sponges. If using cloth towels, you should wash them often in the hot cycle of the washing machine.
- For canned goods, remember to clean lids before opening.

2. Separate: Don't cross-contaminate

- **Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from other foods.**
- Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs without first washing the plate with hot soapy water.
- Use one cutting board only for raw foods and another only for ready-to-eat foods, such as bread, fresh fruits and vegetables, and cooked meat.

3. Cook: Cook to safe temperatures

- **Use a food thermometer** to measure the internal temperature of cooked foods and ensure that meat, poultry, seafood, and egg products are cooked to safe minimum temperatures.
- **Cook ground beef to least 160°F and ground poultry to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F.** Color is not a reliable indicator of doneness.
- **Reheat fully cooked hams packaged at a USDA-inspected plant to 140°F** (165°F for cooked ham packaged at any other location). Reheat leftovers to 165°F.
- **Cook seafood to 145°F.** Clams, mussels, and oysters should not be consumed if the shells did not open during the cooking process.
- Cook eggs until the yolks and whites are firm. Use only recipes in which the eggs are cooked or heated to 160°F.
- **Cook all beef, lamb, pork, and veal steaks, roasts, and chops to 145°F** with a 3-minute rest time after removal from the heat source.
- Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a boil when reheating. Heat other leftovers to 165°F.
- Heat hot dogs, luncheon meats, bologna, and other deli meats until steaming hot or 165°F.

4. Chill: Refrigerate promptly

- **Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, and other perishables within 2 hours of cooking or purchasing.** Refrigerate within 1 hour if the temperature outside is above 90°F.
- Never thaw food at room temperature, such as on the countertop. It is safe to thaw food in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave. If you thaw food in cold water or in the microwave, you should cook it immediately.
- Cooked leftovers in the refrigerator should be thrown away after two days.

Dates Listed on Food Products

Open dating is found primarily on perishable foods such as meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products.

- A “sell-by” date tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before the date expires.
- A “best if used by” or “before” date is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
- A “use-by” date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality.
- Deli-sliced meat and cheese should be discarded 4 days after purchasing.
- Pre-sliced meat and cheese should be discarded 4 days after opening package.

Grocery Shopping

Follow these safe food-handling practices while you shop:

- Carefully read food labels while in the store to make sure food is not past its “sell-by” date.
- Put raw packaged meat, poultry, or seafood into a plastic bag before placing it in the shopping cart so that its juices will not drip on – and contaminate – other foods. If the meat counter does not offer plastic bags, pick some up from the produce section.
- **Buy only pasteurized milk, cheese, and other dairy products from the refrigerated section.** When buying fruit juice from the refrigerated section of the store, be sure that the juice label says it is pasteurized.
- Purchase eggs in the shell from the refrigerated section of the store. (Note: store the eggs in their original carton in the main part of your refrigerator once you are home.) For recipes that call for eggs that are raw or undercooked when the dish is served – homemade Caesar salad dressing and homemade ice cream are two examples – use either shell eggs that have been treated to destroy *Salmonella* by pasteurization or pasteurized egg products. When consuming undercooked eggs, pasteurized eggs are the safer option.
- Never buy food that is displayed in unsafe or unclean conditions.
- When purchasing canned goods, make sure that they are free of dents, cracks, or bulging lids.
- Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged.
- Do not buy ready-to-eat foods from bulk food bins (breads, bagels, nuts, candies).

Instructions for Ordering/Eating at a Restaurant:

- Always wash your hands with soap and warm water before eating.
- **Order only cooked foods** (no salads, raw fruits, or raw vegetables).
- **Order all eggs, meats, poultry and fish well done.**
- Ask whether the food contains uncooked ingredients such as eggs, sprouts, meat, poultry, or seafood. If so, choose something else.
- Ask how these foods have been cooked. If the server does not know the answer, ask to speak to the chef to be sure your food has been cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature.
- Raw garnishes should be avoided.
- Avoid buffets and salad bars.
- Avoid self-serve beverages and desserts (bring your own bottle of water or soda).

- Avoid self-serve condiments.
- Place silverware on your plate, clean placemat or napkin – not directly on the table.
- If you plan to save leftovers to eat later, refrigerate perishable foods within 2 hours.
- Deliver/carry out orders should be eaten immediately.

While in the Hospital

- Food may be brought from home (it is important to keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot while being transported to the hospital).
- Please avoid the use of large containers.
- All containers must be clearly labeled with the patient's name and the initial storage date.
- Refrigerated foods from home may be stored in the Patient Pantry or Family Respite Room refrigerator for a maximum of two days; after two days, if unlabeled, or if past the expiration date these items will be discarded.
- Once food has been brought into the patient's room it should not be stored again in the patient pantry or family respite room refrigerators.
- After two hours at room temperature, all food should be discarded.
- Food prepared at home and brought in for use beyond two days' time should be labeled and stored in the freezer.
- Restaurant delivery directly to the hospital is not permitted.