

# Family Keys

Self-Care Resources for Children & Their Families

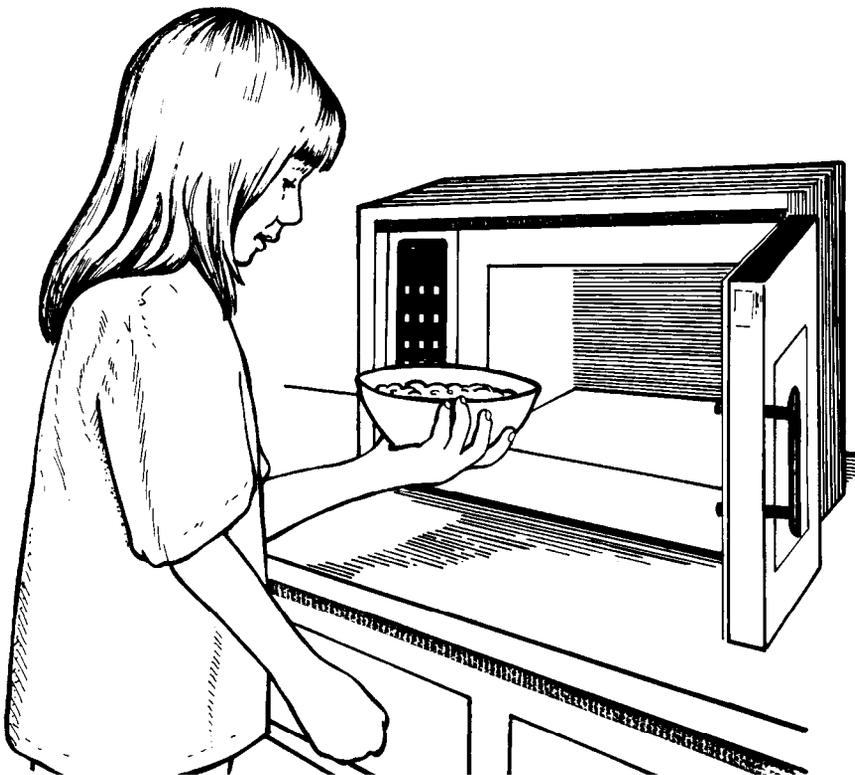
## Kitchen and Food Safety



KEY

### Kitchen Safety

As children find themselves responsible for lunch box, snack and meal preparation, they need to learn how to keep themselves safe in the kitchen — and their food safe to eat.



### Parents can help: Kitchen safety rules

Here are some kitchen safety rules to discuss with your school-age child(ren):

- ▼ Always wash your hands with warm water and soap, and dry them before handling food.
- ▼ Keep water and wet hands away from electric outlets, switches, cords and appliances.
- ▼ Always pick up a knife by its handle, not its blade. Always use a clean cutting board. Cut away from yourself with a knife or a vegetable peeler.
- ▼ Use only metal pans on the stove or in the oven — no plastic. Use only microwavable glass or plastic in the microwave — no foil or metal spoons.
- ▼ Tie your hair back and roll up your sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing, long sleeves and hair can catch on fire or catch on pot handles, causing a spill or scalding burn.
- ▼ Be sure you know **which** burner you are turning on.

*continued on page 2*

**Kitchen safety rules, *continued***

Keep the handles of pots and pans turned away from the edge of the stove or counter.

Never leave dish towels, pot holders, plastic utensils or cookbooks near a hot burner where they can catch on fire. Remember, burners stay hot after you turn them off.

Always use dry pot holders or oven mitts when handling hot pans, cookie sheets and other equipment. Wet pot holders on hot pans form steam that will burn your fingers. Use pot holders when you take hot foods from the microwave, too.

Open the lids of hot pots and pans away from your face. Stand back when opening the oven or microwave door so the steam won't burn you.

Clean up any spills from the floor right away so you won't slip. Clean up spilled grease so it won't catch fire.



# Family Kitchen Rules

**B**efore children cook alone in the kitchen, discuss each situation and fill in the blanks. For example, one rule about cooking might be "Only prepare what you know how to do. Never make anything when you're home alone that you have not made when parents are around."

**Appliances and kitchen tools to use:**

**Safety directions:**

**Appliances and kitchen tools NOT to use:**

**Family rules about cooking:**

**Family rules about cleaning up:**

**Family rules about getting dinner started:**

# Avoid accidents in the kitchen.

**G**ather the whole family for this activity. Together, check your kitchen for safety. For example, you can run hot water into a metal container and use a cooking thermometer to check that the temperature is only 120 to 130 degrees F. If it's too hot and could cause burns, an adult can adjust the hot water heater.

See if you can find 10 ways to make your kitchen safer:



Safety hazard	Safety measure
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

## Food Safety

Many cases of “stomach flu” and diarrhea are due to food poisoning from food improperly handled in the home. These illnesses are usually not life-threatening, but do cause a lot of discomfort and missed days at school or work.

Parents can help:

### Food safety rules

Teach children that mishandling food can make them sick. Start simply, for example: “*Germs grow on the table but not in the refrigerator.*” You can work up to explaining bacteria and even use their actual names, such as *salmonella*.

Here are some food safety rules you can discuss with your school-age child(ren):

- ▼ **Cleanliness** — Clean hands, clean food, clean counters, clean knives all are important. Use a separate, clean spoon for tasting.
- ▼ **Use a clean dish cloth** and hot soapy water to wash dishes and wipe off counters and tools when you finish using them. Rinse dishes thoroughly in clear hot water. Let them air dry or use a clean towel to dry. If your family has a dishwasher, learn how to load and run it properly.
- ▼ **Wash raw fruits and vegetables with cold water** before eating them.
- ▼ **Crack eggs cleanly** so whites and yolks do not touch the shell. Avoid eating cookie dough or other food containing raw eggs.
- ▼ **Check your refrigerator temperature.** Be sure your refrigerator is 33 to 40 degrees F and the freezer is 0 degrees F.
- ▼ **“Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold”** is an easy refrain for even young children. Temperatures between 40 and 150 degrees F allow rapid growth of bacteria that can cause food poisoning. Keep perishable food you will use in the next few days in the refrigerator, or label and freeze it. Keep hot food hot — at least 150 degrees F — but **never** leave food cooking unattended on the stove. Put leftover cooked foods away right after a meal. Discard any foods containing meat or eggs — except baked goods — if they have been left at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- ▼ **Keep in the refrigerator** foods such as meats, eggs, precooked foods, leftovers and dairy products. Store fresh meats and fish in the coldest part of the refrigerator, and cook within 3 days. Separate raw from ready-to-eat meat and poultry, so juices from the raw products do not get on the cooked ones.
- ▼ **Read and follow instructions** for storing and preparing packaged and frozen foods. If food needs to be thawed before cooking or eating, allow time to safely thaw in the refrigerator — not on the counter — or follow microwave directions. Cook frozen foods like pizza without thawing first.

- ▼ **Cook eggs, chicken and meat thoroughly in one cooking session.** Hamburgers should be completely done in the center, with no pink color. Put cooked food on a clean dish, never on the one that held raw eggs, chicken or meat.
- ▼ **Label and date leftovers.** Use up leftovers — especially main dishes — within 3 days. Refrigeration will not stop bacterial growth, but will

slow it down. Bacteria cannot grow in the freezer, so properly wrapped foods can be stored there longer. But freezing or cooking will not make food safe again if bacteria have already grown in the food.

- ▼ **If you think food is spoiled, don't taste it — throw it away!** you can't always see or smell if food is spoiled.



## Kitchen Safety Puzzle

*What's wrong with this picture?*

**H**ave your child(ren) look at "What's wrong with this picture?" and circle the kitchen safety problems.

Discuss how to safely handle the food and make the kitchen safe to prevent accidents.



— illustration by Hawley Wright

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## Family Activities

# Food Safety Inventory

Together, use the following list to check your kitchen for food safety.

## Food Safety Checklist

Check ✓

### In cupboards:

Yes  No

**Canned foods are undamaged, rust-free and fairly free of dust.**

- ▼ If you find cans with leaks, bulges or major dents, dispose of them out of reach of animals or others,
- ▼ Store foods such as flour or opened baking mixes in tightly closed containers.
- ▼ Keep poisons, paints, cleaning and laundry supplies well away from food and out of reach of small children.
- ▼ Move opened containers of peanut butter and salad dressing to the refrigerator so they last longer. If you find an opened bottle or can labeled "Refrigerate after opening," throw it away. Check expiration or "Best if used by" dates.

### In the refrigerator:

Yes  No

**The refrigerator and freezer are cold enough.**

- ▼ With the right thermometer, check that the refrigerator temperature is 33 to 40 degrees F and the freezer compartment is 0 degrees F.
- ▼ Check to be sure foods are properly covered or wrapped and labeled, and not held too long. Look inside covered dishes, sniff beverages, open bags and bins. Throw out questionable items as well as products that you really don't plan to use. Discard any fish or main dish leftovers kept more than 3 days.

**Remember,** you can't always tell food is spoiled by how it looks or smells. Never taste suspect food, just throw it out.



See if you can find 10 ways to improve food safety:

Food safety hazard	Food safety measure
1	
2	
3	
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## Resources

Ask your county or area extension office for more information on kitchen and food safety. Many extension offices carry consumer guides and posters, or can tell you how to order them. You'll find your local extension office listed in the county government pages of your phone book.

You may want to review *Key 10: Fire Safety*, and *Key 5: First Aid*.

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KEY

**Kitchen and Food Safety**  
helps families  
practice food

safety — wash your hands with soapy warm water often while you are fixing foods; keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold; keep everything clean. Family kitchen safety rules help keep kitchen activities accident-free and fun.



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**Authors:** Jill Steinberg, associate specialist, Center for Action on the Family, University of Wisconsin-Madison and UW-Extension; David Riley, professor, Child & Family Studies, UW-Madison and UW-Extension; Cheryl Rew Stapleton, Columbia County family living agent, and Ann Keim, volunteer development specialist, UW-Extension.

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