Cooking encompasses knowledge as varied as dietary planning, culinary arts, chemistry, and hygiene. So it’s important that students understand the safety rules for food preparation, cooking, storage, and cleanup.

**Related KidsHealth Links**

**Articles for Teens:**

- **Cooking Tips and Resources**
  
  TeensHealth.org/en/teens/whats-cooking.html

- **Food Safety**
  

- **Food Poisoning**
  
  TeensHealth.org/en/teens/food-poisoning.html

- **Salmonellosis**
  
  TeensHealth.org/en/teens/salmonellosis.html

- **E. Coli**
  
  TeensHealth.org/en/teens/e-coli.html

- **Shigellosis**
  
  TeensHealth.org/en/teens/shigellosis.html

- **Tapeworm**
  
  TeensHealth.org/en/teens/tapeworm.html

- **Gastrointestinal Infections and Diarrhea**
  
  TeensHealth.org/en/teens/diarrhea.html

- **Hand Washing**
  
  TeensHealth.org/en/teens/handwashing.html

- **The 5-Second Rule**
  
  TeensHealth.org/en/teens/5-seconds.html

- **Smart Supermarket Shopping**
  
  TeensHealth.org/en/teens/grocery-shopping.html

**Discussion Questions**

*Note: The following questions are written in language appropriate for sharing with your students.*

1. There are certain safety rules for handling food. What do these rules protect you from? What risks are there for fruits and vegetables? Meats, poultry, and fish? How about potential kitchen safety problems?

2. What can you do to improve food safety while you’re food shopping? How about while you’re cleaning and cooking the food in the kitchen?

3. Do you know any rules about storing fruits and vegetables? Meats, poultry, and fish? How about storing leftovers? If you store things in the fridge or freezer, how do you safely thaw or reheat them?
Activities for Students

Note: The following activities are written in language appropriate for sharing with your students.

Follow the Food Chain

Objectives:
Students will:
- Think critically about what can affect the safety of our food and what we can do to limit risks

Materials:
- “Follow the Food Chain” handout
- Pen or pencil
- Computer with Internet access

Class Time:
45 minutes

Activity:
Safety comes first with food - even before great taste. And although the U.S. food supply is among the safest in the world, the food we see in the grocery store or in our own kitchens can still be spoiled. Do some research at TeensHealth.org, evaluate potential food safety risks at each stage on the ‘Follow the Food Chain’ handout, and write some food safety tips for each stage.

Extension:
At TeensHealth.org and other sites, check out some of the health problems that can result from handling food improperly. Choose one disease to describe, including symptoms and prevention methods, then cite some examples of food recalls due to the disease.
Soup to Nuts Food Safety Tips

Objective:
Students will:
  • Evaluate the safety steps required to prepare a recipe as well as to store and reheat leftovers

Materials:
  • Computer with Internet access, cookbooks, or TV cooking shows
  • Pencil or pen and paper

Class Time:
45 minutes (plus time related to cooking)

Activity:
Do you ever make dinner for the whole family? Just get some inspiration from a cookbook, TV chef, or recipe site, choose some dishes to make, follow food safety rules, and cook away!

For this activity, plan a meal that you will make for your family. On a sheet of paper, list all of the safety considerations for each of your recipes. Include what you’ll do when you buy, clean, prepare, and cook the food. Don’t forget to explain how you’ll safely use kitchen appliances, cutting boards, and knives. Then list the steps you’ll take to clean up the kitchen and safely store any leftovers. Also explain how long the leftovers can be safely stored, and the safest ways to reheat them.

Extension:
Create a Top Ten Food Safety Tips poster to hang on school walls, or an infographic to share on social media.

Reproducible Materials
Handout: Follow the Food Chain
KidsHealth.org/classroom/9tot12/personal/nutrition/food_safety_handout1.pdf
Follow the Food Chain

Instructions: For each step from grocery store to mealtime, list potential food safety risks as well as food safety tips to minimize risks.

Food safety risks:

Food safety tips:
Quiz

1. When you’re grocery shopping, you should put refrigerated items in your cart ________________.

2. and 3. Frozen meat, poultry, and fish should be thawed in a ________________ or ________________, never at room temperature.

4. Never ________________ raw chicken, because that can spread germs around the kitchen.

5. Chicken and turkey, and ground beef, ground veal, ground pork, and ground lamb should be cooked to a certain temperature and until the meat is no longer ________________.

6. All fruits and veggies should be scrubbed with plain ________________ to remove any pesticides, dirt, or bacterial contamination.

7. Always wash your ________________ with warm water and soap before preparing any food.

8. Never put cooked food on a dish or cutting board that was holding ________________ meat, poultry, or fish.

9. Put leftovers in the fridge as soon as possible, within ________________ hours.

10. Never put ________________ in a microwave.
Quiz Answer Key

1. When you’re grocery shopping, you should put refrigerated items in your cart last.

2. and 3. Frozen meat, poultry, and fish should be thawed in a refrigerator or microwave, never at room temperature.

4. Never wash raw chicken, because that can spread germs around the kitchen.

5. Chicken and turkey, and ground beef, ground veal, ground pork, and ground lamb should be cooked to a certain temperature and until the meat is no longer pink.

6. All fruits and veggies should be scrubbed with plain water to remove any pesticides, dirt, or bacterial contamination.

7. Always wash your hands with warm water and soap before preparing any food.

8. Never put cooked food on a dish or cutting board that was holding raw meat, poultry, or fish.

9. Put leftovers in the fridge as soon as possible, within 2 hours.

10. Never put aluminum foil in a microwave.