# TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

Partnership for Food Safety Education

www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

To support you in protecting your family from foodborne illness, the Partnership for Food Safety Education has compiled its ten most popular home food safety myths and facts from over the years.

Please feel free to share these myths and facts with your community!

You can find everything you need on home food safety at www.fightbac.org

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# MYTH:

"Cross contamination doesn't happen in the refrigerator -- it is too cold in there for germs to survive!"



Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# FACT:

**Some bacteria can survive and even grow in cool, moist environments like the refrigerator.**

In fact, Listeria Monocytogenes grows at temperatures as low as 35.6°F! A recent study from NSF International revealed that the refrigerator produce compartment was one of the "germiest" places in the kitchen, containing Salmonella and Listeria.

- ✓ Keep fresh fruits and vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.
- ✓ Clean your refrigerator regularly with hot water and soap and clean up food and beverage spills immediately to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.
- ✓ Don't forget to clean refrigerator walls and undersides of shelves!

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# MYTH:

"I don't need to clean the refrigerator produce bin because I only put fruit and vegetables in there."



Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# FACT:

**Naturally occurring bacteria in fresh fruits and vegetables can cause cross-contamination in your refrigerator.**

A recent NSF International study found that the refrigerator produce compartment was the #1 "germiest" area in consumers' kitchens!

- ✓ To prevent the buildup of bacteria that can cause food poisoning, it is essential to clean your produce bin and other bins in your refrigerator often with hot water and liquid soap, rinse thoroughly, and dry with a clean cloth towel or allow to air dry outside of the refrigerator.

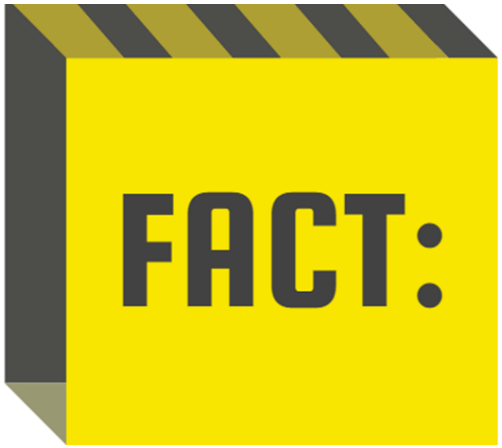
Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# MYTH:

"I don't need to rinse this melon for safety -- the part I eat is on the inside!"

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org




TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

**Sure you're not eating the rind of the melon, but there are many ways for pathogens on the outside of the melon to contaminate the edible portion.**

A knife or peeler passing through the rind can carry pathogens from the outside into the flesh of the melon. The rind also touches the edible portion when fruit is arranged or stacked for serving and garnish.

- ✓ Play it safe and rinse your melon under running tap water while rubbing by hand or scrubbing with a clean brush.
- ✓ Dry the melon with a clean cloth or paper towel.

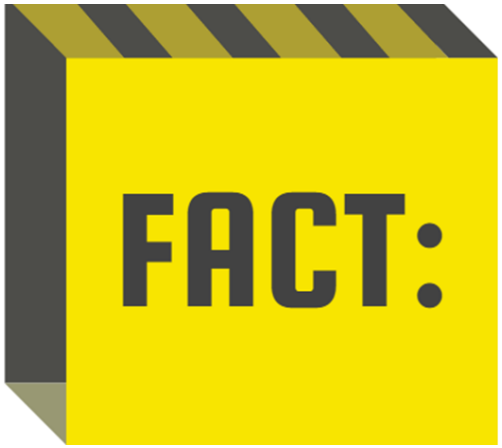
Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# MYTH:

"I eat a vegetarian diet, so I don't have to worry about food poisoning."

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org




TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

**Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet, but like other foods they may carry a risk of foodborne illness.**

- ✓ Always rinse produce under running tap water, including fruits and vegetables with skins and rinds that are not eaten.
- ✓ Never use detergent or bleach to wash fresh fruits or vegetables as these products are not intended for consumption.
- ✓ Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled "ready-to-eat" or "washed" do not need to be re-washed.

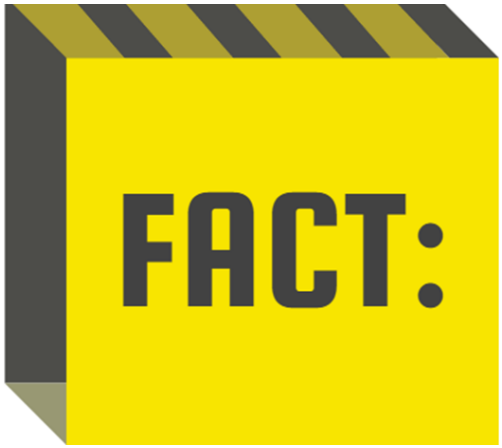
Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# MYTH:

"Leftovers are safe to eat until they smell bad."

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org




TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

**Smell is not an indication of whether food is safe to eat!**

There are many different types of bacteria, some of which cause illness in people and others that don't. The types of bacteria that cause foodborne illness do not affect the taste, smell, or appearance of food.

- ✓ Freeze or toss refrigerated leftovers within 3-4 days even if they smell and look fine.
- ✓ If you're not sure how long leftovers have been in the refrigerator, toss them. If you're not sure how old your leftovers are, remember: when in doubt, throw it out!

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

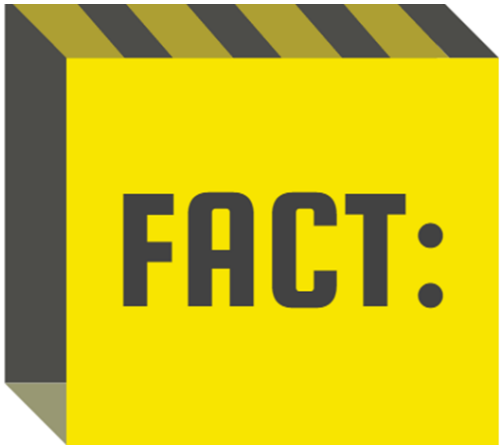
TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# MYTH:

"Freezing food kills harmful bacteria that can cause food poisoning."



Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org




TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

**Bacteria can survive freezing temperatures. Freezing is not a method for making food safe to eat.**

When food is thawed, bacteria can still be present and may begin to multiply.

- ✓ Cooking food to the proper internal temperature is the best way to kill harmful bacteria.
- ✓ Always read and follow the package cooking instructions
- ✓ Use a thermometer to measure the internal temperature of cooked foods.

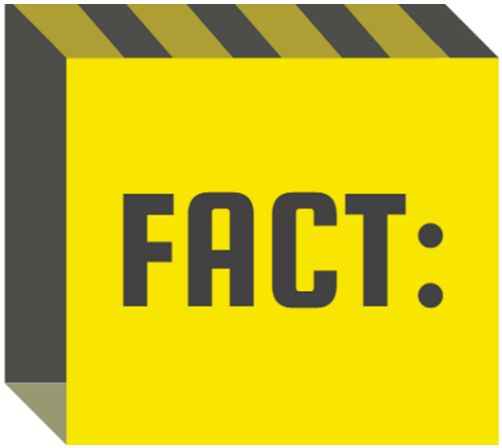
Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# MYTH:

"Putting chicken in a colander and rinsing it with water will remove bacteria like Salmonella."

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org




TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

**Rinsing chicken in a colander will not remove bacteria.**

In fact, it can spread raw juices around your sink, onto your countertops, and onto ready-to-eat foods. Bacteria in raw meat and poultry can only be killed when cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature, which for poultry is 165 °F, as measured by a food thermometer.

- ✓ Save yourself the messiness of rinsing raw poultry. It is not a safety step and can cause cross-contamination!
- ✓ Always use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of your food.

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

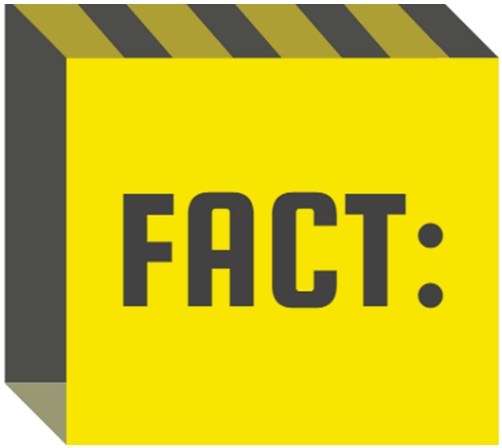
TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# MYTH:

"Only kids eat raw cookie dough and cake batter. If we just keep kids away from the raw products when adults are baking, there won't be a problem!"



Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org




TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

## Just a lick can make you sick!

No one of any age should eat raw cookie dough or cake batter because it could contain germs that cause illness. Whether it's pre-packaged or homemade, the heat from baking is required to kill germs that might be in the raw ingredients.

- ✓ The finished, baked product is far safer – and tastes even better!
- ✓ Remember, kids who eat raw cookie dough and cake batter are at greater risk of getting food poisoning than most adults are.

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

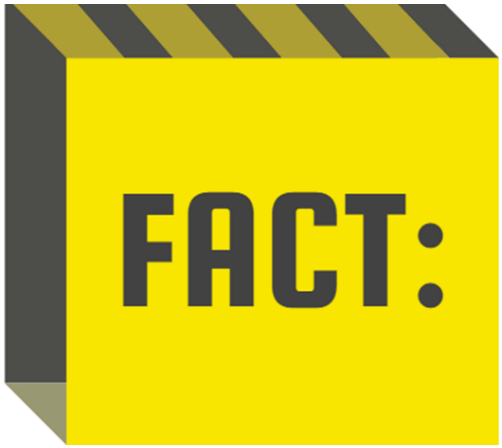
TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# MYTH:

"Once a hamburger turns brown in the middle, it is cooked to a safe internal temperature."



Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org




TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

**You cannot use visual cues to determine whether food has been cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature.**

The ONLY way to know that food has been cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature is to use a food thermometer.

- ✓ Ground meat should be cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature of 160 °F, as measured by a food thermometer.

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# MYTH:

"If I microwave food, the microwaves kill the bacteria, so the food is safe."

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

# FACT:

**Microwaves aren't what kill bacteria – it's the heat generated by microwaves that kills bacteria in foods.**

Microwave ovens are great time-savers and will kill bacteria in foods when heated to a safe internal temperature. However, foods can cook unevenly because they may be shaped irregularly or vary in thickness. Even microwave ovens equipped with a turntable can cook unevenly and leave cold spots in food, where harmful bacteria can survive.

- ✓ Be sure to follow package instructions and rotate and stir foods during the cooking process, if the instructions call for it.
- ✓ Observe any stand times as called for in the directions.
- ✓ Check the temperature of microwaved foods with a food thermometer in several spots.

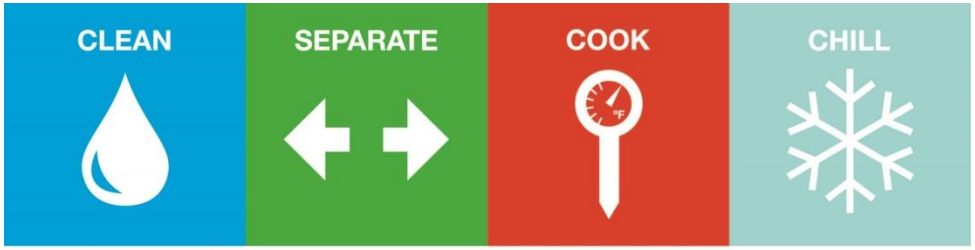
Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org

TOP 10 HOME FOOD SAFETY MYTHBUSTERS

View all of our food safety myths and facts.

Keep Fighting BAC!® for good health
www.fightbac.org

Click the image below for Core Four Values Resources




The Partnership for Food Safety Education delivers trusted, science-based behavioral health messaging and a network of resources that support consumers in their efforts to reduce risk of foodborne infection.

Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org