

# Food Safety During COVID-19

## Tips for Handling Food Safely

**W**ith all the COVID-19 guidelines for washing hands, physical distancing, and avoiding public places, you may be wondering how this affects your food. Grocery stores are one of the few places we can go, but we are encouraged to shop less frequently, sanitize our hands and grocery carts, and keep at least six feet away from others while in the store. With all of these precautions, you may be curious about the safety of the food you are buying.

According to the CDC, there is currently no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with the transmission of COVID-19. COVID-19 is a respiratory illness and the transmission route is through person-to-person contact and through direct contact with respiratory droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes. This is unlike gastro-intestinal viruses, such as norovirus, which makes people sick through contaminated foods. Regardless, it is best to practice general food safety precautions, including knowing how to select foods in the grocery store, storing them properly, cooking them safely, and cleaning up afterward. So shop for and enjoy the foods you normally do, and maybe explore some new recipes! But, remember to follow food-safety guidelines, including the ones provided below.



### Buying Food

Knowing how to select foods is the first step to good food safety. Always check the expiration date on food labels, especially when buying packaged meat, poultry, or fish. Even if the expiration date is still acceptable, do not buy fish or meats that smell or look strange. Also, check inside egg cartons to ensure that the eggs are clean and free from cracks. Avoid fruits with broken skin because bacteria can enter through the opening and contaminate the fruit.

To ensure freshness, refrigerated items

(such as meat, dairy, eggs, and fish) should be put in your cart last. Keep meats separate from other items, especially produce. If your drive home is longer than 1 hour, consider putting these items in a cooler to keep them fresh.

### Refrigerating and Freezing

Before you put the groceries away, check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer. Your refrigerator should be set for 40°F (5°C) and your freezer should be set to 0°F (-18°C) or lower. These chilly temperatures will help keep any bacteria in your foods from multiplying. If your refrigerator does not have a thermostat, it is a good idea to invest in a thermometer for the fridge and freezer.

Storing food promptly and correctly can help prevent food poisoning. Here are some quick

tips to remember for foods that need to be kept cool:

- Put meat, poultry, and fish in separate plastic bags so that their juices don't get on your other foods.
- Freeze or cook raw ground meat, poultry, or fish within 1 to 2 days.
- Freeze or cook fresh meat (steaks, chops, roasts) within 3 to 5 days.
- Keep unopened packages of hot dogs and deli meats in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Opened packages of hot dogs should be eaten within 1 week and deli meats within 3-5 days.

## Preparing and Cooking Fruits and Vegetables

Wash all fruits and vegetables with plain running water (even if you plan to peel them) to remove any pesticide residue, dirt, or bacteria. Scrub firm produce, such as carrots, cucumbers, or melons, with a clean produce brush. Wash melons, such as cantaloupes and watermelons, before eating to avoid carrying bacteria from the rind to the knife to the inside of the fruit. Remove the outer leaves of leafy greens, such as spinach or lettuce.

## Preparing and Cooking Raw Meat, Poultry, Fish, and Egg Products

Before preparing any foods and after handling raw meat, poultry, fish, or egg products, wash your hands with warm water and soap. Here are some other tips for preparing foods properly to reduce the risk of food poisoning :

- Designate one cutting board for raw meat, poultry, and fish.
- Keep raw meats and their juices away from other foods in the refrigerator and on countertops.
- Never wash raw chicken. Washing raw meat and poultry can spread germs around the kitchen. Germs are killed during cooking when chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C). So washing doesn't help.
- Use separate utensils for cooking and serving raw meat, poultry, fish, or eggs.
- Never put cooked food on a dish that was holding raw meat, poultry, or fish.
- Thaw meat, poultry, and fish in the refrigerator or microwave, never at room temperature.
- Cook thawed meat, poultry, and fish immediately. Throw away any leftover uncooked meat, poultry, or fish marinades.
- Do not allow raw eggs to sit at room temperature for more than 2 hours to reduce the risk of Salmonella infection.

Use a meat thermometer to tell whether meats are cooked thoroughly. Place the thermometer in the thickest portion of the meat and away from bones or fat and wash the probe between uses. Most thermometers indicate at which temperature

the type of meat is safely cooked, or you can refer to these recommendations:

- Poultry (whole, pieces, and ground): 165°F (74°C)
- Whole cuts (steaks, roasts, and chops) of beef, veal, pork, and lamb: 145°F (63°C) with a 3-minute rest period before carving or eating
- Ground beef, veal, pork, and lamb: 160°F (71°C)
- Fish: 145°F (63°C)
- Egg dishes: 160°F (71°C)
- Leftovers: at least 165°F (74°C)

## Cleaning Up

Cleaning up is an important part of the food safety equation because it reduces the spread of bacteria. Refrigerate any leftovers as soon as possible after cooking. If left to sit at room temperature, bacteria in the food will multiply quickly. Consume leftovers within 3 to 4 days or throw them out.

Wash cutting boards, which can become a breeding ground for bacteria if they aren't cleaned carefully, separately from other dishes and utensils in hot, soapy water. After washing and disinfecting the cutting board, rinse it thoroughly with plain water and pat with paper towels or leave it to air dry. Don't use old cutting boards with cracks or deep gouges because bacteria may hide in the crevices of the board.

Wash your hands if they come in contact with raw meat, poultry, or fish. Don't use a dish towel to wipe your hands after handling raw meat, poultry, fish, or eggs — use paper towels instead. Bacteria can contaminate the cloth towels and can then spread to another person's hands. Wash dirty dishrags and towels in hot soapy water.

After preparing food, wipe your kitchen counters and other exposed surfaces with hot soapy water or a commercial or homemade cleaning solution. Periodically sanitize your kitchen sink, drain, and garbage disposal by using in a commercial or homemade cleaning solution.

Taking these simple precautions can reduce the chance of foodborne illnesses.

## In Remembrance of Lottie Titus-Whiteside

On Tuesday afternoon, May 26, 2020, Lottie Titus-Whiteside passed away peacefully in her home at Hunters View/West Point. Having resided



in the neighborhood for nearly 25 years, Lottie was a relentless and towering figure across West Point, southeast San Francisco, District 10, HOPE SF, and our nation. A mother of two, grandmother of five, and champion of countless others, her legacy is beyond comprehension.

One of the creators of HOPE SF, Lottie served every segment of her community for over three decades with grace, kindness, selflessness, and that unforgettable smile and sense of humor, feeding the hungry, caring for children, providing shelter, leading support groups, caring for seniors, healing community violence, designing public policy.

A former San Francisco Housing Authority Commissioner and devout woman of faith, Lottie spoke nationally and locally, constantly reminding all of us "to not quit until every child, youth and family on these developments are achieving to the best of their ability, their God-given potential to excel!" She will be sorely missed.

In lieu of flowers, tax-deductible contributions may be made to support the family celebration of life via Bayview Senior Services, 1753 Carroll Ave, San Francisco, CA 94124 (Re: Celebration of Lottie Titus).

# Keeping Foster Children Safe *The Kitchen*

As any parent will tell you, keeping your children safe is a full-time job. All it takes is a turned back and a couple seconds for your children to find themselves in harm's way. According to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 9.2 million children annually had an initial emergency room visit for an unintentional injury, a majority of which occurred in their respective homes. That's why it is important for resource families to look closely at their homes and identify potential safety issues that could arise. For this article, we will focus on safety in the kitchen.

According to the RFA Written Directives, "A Resource Family shall apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard, as specified in Section 11-12, in determining if it is age or developmentally appropriate for a child to have access to and use the following items:

Household kitchen knives and appliances for use in meal preparation."

In the kitchen, it is important to make sure all sharp knives, forks and scissors are in a place where foster children cannot reach them. Some parents have put their knives in a knife block that lays down instead of standing up, so

it could be tucked away in a drawer or upper level cabinet. Another place to put knives is in a drawer that has a childproof latch. The key to success is using the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

Household kitchen knives and appliances do not need to be locked or inaccessible to a child who is of sufficient age and maturity to use such items. Your foster children may claim they have handled knives or other sharp objects before at their parent's home, but it is important to set your own ground rules early on and make sure they are understood.

## SECTION 11-03: Storage Area Requirements

*(d) A Resource Family shall apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard, as specified in Section 11-12, in determining if it is age or developmentally appropriate for a child to have access to and use the following items:*

- (1) Household kitchen knives and appliances for use in meal preparation.*
- (2) Medications necessary for self-administration by the child.*
- (3) Disinfectants and cleaning solutions for use in performing household chores.*

*(e) A Resource Family shall permit a nonminor dependent to have access to the following items:*

- (1) Household kitchen knives and appliances for use in meal preparation.*
- (2) Medications necessary for self-administration by the nonminor dependent.*
- (3) Disinfectants and cleaning solutions for use in performing household chores.*

*(f) In allowing a child or a nonminor dependent to access and use the items specified in subsection (d) or (e), a Resource Family shall ensure that the safety of a child, a nonminor dependent, and others in the home is maintained.*



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Newsletter Website: <https://sfcaresforkids.org/kids-newsletter/>

### Helpful Phone Numbers

HSA Operator	(415) 557-5000
CPS Child Abuse Hotline	(800) 856-5553 or (415) 558-2650
Foster Care Ombudsman	(415) 558-2828
Transportation Duty Line	(415) 557-5376
Licensing/RFA/Recruitment Hotline	(415) 558-2200
Free Foster Parenting Respite Service	(415) 861-4060 x 3035
Community Services	211
Non-emergency Government Services	311

FCS Agency Directory: [www.sfhsa.org/174.htm](http://www.sfhsa.org/174.htm)

San Francisco Family and Children Services and Parenting for Permanency College (PPC), continue to provide training through Zoom (virtual platform).

<b>RFA Pre-Service Approval Training</b>	
English RFA Pre-Service Training	September 22- October 1, 2020 (Tues/Thurs) 5:15-9 p.m.
<b>Spanish RFA Pre-Service Training</b>	<b>September 19 &amp; 26, 2020 (Saturdays) 8:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.</b>
English RFA Pre-Service Training	October 17 & 24, 2020 (Saturdays) 8:45-4:30 p.m.
<b>Placement Training</b>	
SA/HIV 36-hour Cycle	September 22-October 20, 2020 (Tues/Thurs) 5:15-9 p.m.
<b>ABC's of Baby Care (Spanish)</b>	<b>September 9, 2020 5:15-8:30 p.m.</b>
ABC's of Baby Care	October 28, 2020 5:15 - 8:30 p.m.
<b>Ongoing Training</b>	
<b>Advanced Training: Parenting in Oz (Spanish)</b>	<b>October 3 &amp; 10, 2020 9:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.</b>
<b>All training is held on Zoom. To register for training please contact: Alternative Family Services (AFS) <a href="mailto:PPC@afs4kids.org">PPC@afs4kids.org</a> or through your RFA Worker</b>	

## Special Announcements

Resource Family meetings will be offered through Zoom until further notice. For more information about meetings or to attend, please reach out to your RFA Worker or contact Arlene Hylton at [Arlene.hylton@sfgov.org](mailto:Arlene.hylton@sfgov.org) or 451-557-5067.

- **Quality Parenting Initiative Meeting - Monthly**  
4th Thursday of month, 11am to 12:30 p.m.  
September 24, 2020  
October 22, 2020

- **Resource Family Convening - Bi-monthly**  
3rd Wednesday of EVERY OTHER month, alternating 5 PM to 7 PM and 7-9 p.m.  
September 16, 2020, 5-7 p.m.  
November 18, 2020, 7-9 p.m.

- **Caregiver Quarterly Meetings - Quarterly**  
1st Tuesday of each quarter, 6-8 p.m.  
Tentative dates: October 6, 2020

**Resource Parent Support Group (Presented by SA/HIV Program)**  
3rd Tuesday (English) and 3rd Thursday (Spanish) of each month, 7 to 9 p.m. unless otherwise announced. To attend SA/HIV Support Group, please contact Sharon Walchak at (510) 282-4658.

*English:* September 15, October 20, and November 17, 2020  
*Spanish:* September 17, October 15, and November 19, 2020

## Other Training Resources

Approved Resource Families are required to complete 8 hours of training yearly.

### **Foster Parent College**

<http://www.fosterparentcollege.com/>

### **QPI California**

Just In Time Training: <http://www.qpicalifornia.org/>

### **Mandated Reporter Training**

<https://mandatedreporterca.com/>

### **Written Directives version 6.1 (latest version):**

[https://www.cdss.ca.gov/portals/9/ccr/rfa/WD-V6.1-FINAL-1.7.20\\_AV.pdf](https://www.cdss.ca.gov/portals/9/ccr/rfa/WD-V6.1-FINAL-1.7.20_AV.pdf)

### **California Corona Virus (COVID-19) Information**

<https://covid19.ca.gov/>

### **Department of Public Health COVID-19 website (English/Spanish)**

- <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus.asp>
- [https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/ö les/coronavirus\\_facts\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/ö les/coronavirus_facts_ENG.pdf)
- [https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/ö les/coronavirus\\_facts\\_SPA.pdf](https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/ö les/coronavirus_facts_SPA.pdf)

### **Childcare info (link to English and Spanish resources/info)**

<https://www.sfcddcp.org/infectious-diseases-a-to-z/coronavirus-2019-novel-coronavirus/#1585590211125-ccf-b7e93-4edf>