THE NORTH COUNTRY
HEALTH EFFECT

A health & safety guide brought to you by the Clinton County Health Department.

Food safety

CCHD
Clinton County HEALTH Department

While summer is an ideal time for outdoor picnics and barbecues, it's also a time when foodborne illnesses spike. Bacteria grow most rapidly in the *"Danger Zone"* (the range of temperatures between 45 ° and 140 °F). Never leave perishable food out for more than 2 hours. Be prepared and always clean, chill, separate, and cook your food properly for a food safe summer that doesn't include food related illness

Clean

- **Clean surfaces and utensils with soap and water.**
- **Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water** before, during, and after preparing food and before eating.
- **Rinse all fruits and vegetables** under plain running water before eating, cutting or cooking, even if you plan to peel them.
- Washing fruits and vegetables with soap, detergent, or commercial produce wash is not recommended. Do not use bleach solutions or other disinfecting products.

Separate

- **Use separate cutting boards and utensils** for raw meat and poultry, cooked meat and poultry, and ready-to-eat items like vegetables or bread.
- **Always use a fresh, clean plate and tongs for serving** cooked food. Never reuse items that touched raw meat or poultry to serve the food once its cooked.

Wash your hands:

- Before, during and after preparing food.
- After handling raw meat, poultry, seafood (or their juices), or uncooked eggs.
- Before eating.
- After using the toilet, changing diapers, or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- After touching an animal, animal food, or animal waste.
- After touching garbage.

Wash surfaces & utensils

- Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water (especially after they've held raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs).
- Wash dish cloths often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.

Wash fruits & veggies

- Rinse fruits and vegetables under running water without soap, bleach, or commercial produce washes.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables before peeling, removing skin, or cutting away any damaged or bruised areas.
- Scrub firm produce like melons or cucumbers with a clean produce brush.
- Dry produce with a paper towel or clean cloth towel.
- Don't wash meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood to avoid spreading harmful germs around your kitchen.
- Produce labeled as *"pre-washed"* does not need to be washed again.

Cook

- Use a food thermometer to see if your food is the right temperature. Food is safely cooked when the internal temperature gets high enough to kill germs that can make you sick. You can't tell if food is safely cooked by checking its color and texture. Just because your burger is brown, not pink, doesn't mean it's safe to eat!

Chill

- **Chill raw and prepared foods as soon as possible** if you're not eating them right away.
- **Foods that need to be kept cold include:** raw meat, poultry, and seafood; luncheon and deli meats or sandwiches; summer salads (tuna, chicken, egg, pasta, or seafood); cut up fruit and vegetables; and perishable dairy products.
- **Don't leave food at room temperature for longer than 2 hours** (or 1 hour if it's above 90°F). If you are planning a picnic, keep perishable food in an insulated cooler packed with ice or ice packs.
- **A full cooler will maintain its cold temperature longer** than a partially filled one. Keep your food colder longer by placing coolers out of the direct sun and limit how often you're opening them.
- **Thaw frozen food safely in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave**. Never thaw foods on the counter, because bacteria multiply quickly in the parts of the food that reach room temperature.

Cook all meat and poultry to recommended internal temperatures

130°F for rare beef steaks or roast beef.

145°F for shell eggs or foods containing shell eggs.

150°F for pork and food containing pork.

158°F for every part of ground meat or food containing ground meat.

165°F for poultry, poultry stuffing, stuffed meats and stuffing containing meat.

Food allergies

Thousands of North Country residents have food allergies and may experience adverse reactions to products that have food allergens. Most reactions cause mild symptoms, but some are severe and may even be life-threatening.

Though many different foods can cause allergic reactions, there are nine foods identified as major food allergens: milk, eggs, fish, Crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soybeans, and sesame.

If you or a loved one has food allergies, use these 4 tips to help reduce your risk of getting sick:

1. Always read food labels.
2. Avoid foods that you are allergic to.
3. Learn to recognize the early symptoms of an allergic reaction, in case of accidental ingestion.
4. Know what to do in case an allergic reaction occurs. Plan to have ready access to the appropriate treatment measures and medical care.

Foodborne illness

Foodborne illness (sometimes called food poisoning, foodborne disease, or foodborne infection) is common, costly—and preventable. Some foods are more likely than others to contain germs that can make you sick. These foods include:

- Raw and undercooked foods from animals, including meat, chicken and other poultry, eggs, raw milk and products made from it, and seafood.
- Raw vegetables, grains, and fruits or products made from them, including leafy greens, sprouts, and flour.

Symptoms of food poisoning often include diarrhea, vomiting, upset stomach, or nausea. Call your healthcare provider if you have severe symptoms such as:

- Diarrhea and a fever higher than 102°F.
- Diarrhea for more than three days that is not improving.
- Bloody diarrhea.
- So much vomiting that you cannot keep liquids down, which can lead to dehydration.
- Dehydration, which causes symptoms such as dry mouth and throat, feeling dizzy when standing up, and not urinating (peeing) much.

For more heath & safety tips, visit **www.clintonhealth.org/nchealtheffect** or scan the QR code.

SCAN ME

CCHD

Clinton County HEALTH Department
Public Health
133 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh NY 12901
(518) 565-4840   health@clintoncountyny.gov

Information in this guide was adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, **www.cdc.gov**); the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH, **www.health.ny.gov**): and the American Red Cross (**www.redcross.org**).

Updated 5/2025.