

Shopping Tips to Keep Foods Safe

Resource: Fact Sheet
Topic Area: Health and Safety
Subtopic Area: Food Safety

Introduction

Cross-contamination occurs when harmful bacteria is transferred to food from other foods or utensils. It can cause a foodborne illness in which anyone who eats the prepared food can get sick or even die. Not only can cross-contamination occur when preparing meals, but it can also take place when shopping for groceries. Always make food safety your top priority to prevent cross-contamination when shopping for groceries.

Application

- Preparing
 - o Bring a cooler with ice packs to the grocery store.
 - o Know the store layout and map out the best route for limiting the amount of time perishable items are in the Temperature Danger Zone (0 °F to 140 °F) for the shortest amount of time.
 - o Use clean re-usable grocery sacks or new plastic or paper bags.
- Shopping
 - o Place raw meat in plastic bags and on the bottom of the cart.
 - o Keep raw meat separate from ready-to-eat foods.
 - o Place produce in plastic bags.
 - o Keep cleaning supplies separate from foods.
 - o Check expiration dates.
 - o Avoid selecting damaged packages.
 - o Ask the cashier to clean the checkout belt if it appears dirty.
- Transporting
 - o Use a cooler to keep perishables cool.
 - o Keep cleaning supplies separate from food.
 - o Keep raw meat separate from ready-to-eat foods.
- Storing
 - o Label and store all products so that the items are used based on the first-in, first-out (FIFO) method.
 - o Put away items that go in the refrigerator and freezer first.
 - o Store food items at least 6 inches off the floor.
 - o Store food and chemicals separately, in a different room if possible.

Tips for Success

- Sanitize the entire shopping cart with sanitizing wipes.
- Make the grocery store your last stop before returning to the child care facility.
- Check the weather. If the temperature is above 90 °F, refrigerate all perishables within one hour.

References

- Institute of Child Nutrition. (2014). *Family child care fundamentals*. University, MS: Author.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2008). *Kitchen companion*. www.fsis.usda.gov/shared/PDF/Kitchen_Companion.pdf

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