



## Five Risk Factors for Foodborne Illness and How to Prevent

These are the five most common food-handling mistakes, or risk factors, that can cause a foodborne illness:

1. Purchasing food from unsafe sources
2. Failing to cook food correctly
3. Holding food at incorrect temperatures
4. Using contaminated equipment
5. Practicing poor personal hygiene

Purchasing food from unsafe sources can be a big problem. So, purchasing food from approved, reputable supplies is critical.

Other food handling mistakes listed are related to the four main practices. These include:

- **Time-Temperature Abuse**
  - Food suffers when they stay too long at temperatures that are good for growth of pathogens.
    - Food not held at the correct temperatures
    - Food not cooked or reheated enough to kill pathogens
    - Food not cooled correctly.
- **Cross-Contamination**
  - Pathogens can be transferred from one surface or food to another.
    - Ready-to-eat food touches contaminated surfaces
    - Contaminated ingredients are added to food that receives no further cooking
    - Contaminated wiping cloths touch food-contact surfaces
- **Poor Personal Hygiene**
  - Food handlers can cause foodborne illness if they do these following actions:
    - Fail to wash their hands correctly after using the restroom
    - Cough or sneeze on food
    - Touch or scratch wounds and then touch food
    - Work while they are sick
- **Poor Cleaning and Sanitizing**
  - Pathogens can be spread to food if equipment has not been cleaned and sanitized correctly between uses
    - Equipment and utensils are not washed, rinsed and sanitized between uses
    - Wiping cloths are not stored in a sanitizer solution between uses
    - Sanitizing solutions are not at the required levels to sanitize objects
    - Food contact surfaces are wiped clean and not washed, rinsed, and sanitized