

Caregiving in  
The Comfort of Home®

# Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU... CARING FOR OTHERS”

## Hygiene & Food Safety

Foodborne illness (food poisoning) is fairly common—every year about 48 million people (one in six) in the U.S. become ill from eating contaminated foods. Of those, about 3,000 die. Elderly people are at special risk because they can't efficiently fight off the bacteria, virus, and parasites that make people sick.

People often think their illness was caused by their last meal, but the time between eating bad food and the onset of illness can vary widely. Usually, you'll feel sick 1–3 days after eating. But you could become sick anytime from 20 minutes to 3 weeks after eating.

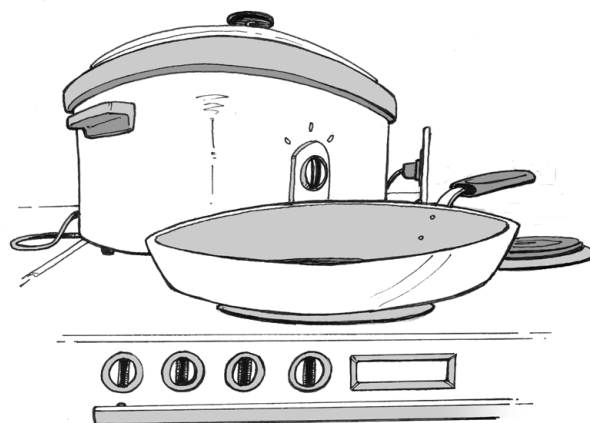
Know the symptoms of foodborne illness: upset stomach, abdominal pain, vomiting, or diarrhea are common. Or, the person in your care may have flu-like symptoms with a fever, headache and body aches. It's easy to confuse *foodborne illness* with other types of illness.

### At Restaurants

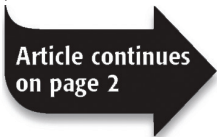
Especially in this time of Covid-19, if you eat out, wipe your table, silverware, plate edges, and drinking glass with a disinfectant wipe and don't share food. Always order food well done. Doggie bags should be refrigerated within 2 hours; within 1 hour if air temperature is 90° F or above.

### At Home

✓ **Wash hands** with soap before preparing, serving or eating food.



- ✓ **Disinfect** sink and kitchen counters with a solution of 4 teaspoons chlorine bleach per quart of water.
- ✓ **Air drying** dishes is more sanitary than using a dish towel.
- ✓ **Check expiration** dates carefully and discard food that's expired.
- ✓ **Cook** all meat, poultry, and fish thoroughly, to an oven temperature of at least 325° F. Cook hamburgers or chopped meat to an internal temperature of 160° F. (There is much less chance of being infected by a solid piece of meat because bacteria collects only on the outside.)
- ✓ **Check temperature** after reheating foods in the microwave oven, allow standing time. Then, use a clean food thermometer to check that food has reached 165° F.
- ✓ **Keep hot foods at 140° F** or more and cold foods at 50° F or colder.
- ✓ **Keep refrigerator** below 41° F.
- ✓ **Cook eggs** until the yolks are no longer runny; never serve raw eggs.
- ✓ **Don't serve raw** oysters, clams, or shellfish.



- ✓ **Avoid unpasteurized** milk and cider.
- ✓ **Don't keep refrigerated leftovers more than 3–4 days.** Even if the food looks and smells fine, it may not be safe.
- ✓ **Thaw foods** properly.
- ✓ **Separate raw and ready-to-eat** foods.

Source: National Institutes of Health; Centers for Disease Control; *The Comfort of Home: A Complete Guide for Caregivers*

## Handwashing: A Healthy Habit in the Kitchen

Handwashing is one of the most important things you can do to prevent food poisoning when you are preparing food. Washing your hands frequently with soap and water is an easy way to prevent germs from spreading around your kitchen and to other foods.

Washing hands is important even if you're wearing gloves. **Be sure to wash your hands before and after using gloves to prevent the spread of germs.** You can contaminate gloves with germs from your hands when you put on gloves. Contaminated gloves can spread germs to your hands when you remove the gloves.

Handwashing is especially important during key times when germs can spread. **Key times to wash hands in the kitchen:**

- Before, during, and after preparing any food.
- After handling raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.
- After touching garbage.
- After wiping counters or cleaning other surfaces with chemicals.
- After touching pets, pet food, or pet treats.
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Before eating.

## Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Handwashing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs, but it's important to follow these five steps every time:

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Source: CDC Campaign: *Life Is Better With Clean Hands*; [FoodSafety.gov](http://FoodSafety.gov)

## Taking Care of Yourself— Stop Touching Your Face!

It's a quirk of human nature that we touch our eyes, noses and mouths (the T zone) all day long. Kids do it and adults do it—even gorillas, orangutans and chimpanzees do it. Researchers believe people may touch their faces to soothe themselves in times of stress. But it's also a major way we pick up infections from the common cold to Covid-19. Our eyes, nose and mouth are all entry points for Covid and many other germs.

To stop the habit, try to be mindful of your hands. Do not cough and sneeze into your hands. If you cannot stop the habit, try wearing gloves. This will serve as a gentle reminder of where your hands are and what they are doing.

Want to improve your chance of avoiding Covid-19? Stop touching your face!

Source: *New York Times*; *HenrytheHand.com*; *livescience.com/why-hard-to-stop-touching-face*



## Sanitize Sponges

All it takes is 1 minute on high in the microwave to kill bacteria on your kitchen sponges. Wet them first so they don't catch fire, and also check that it doesn't have a metallic scrub pad. If yours does, put it in the dishwasher instead.

## Inspiration

*The hardest-learned lesson: that people have only their kind of love to give, not our kind.*

— Mignon McLaughlin

## Live Life Laughing!

Of all the dangerous things I've done in my life, I'll be really upset if I die because I touched my face!



## Memory Care - Making Decisions

It is important to keep in mind that the person in the early stage of Alzheimer's can continue to do many of the things he has always done. However, one important ability that is often lost early is making decisions, even such seemingly simple ones as what to order in a restaurant.

*Caregiving in  
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To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

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## **SAFETY TIPS— Grocery Shopping in the Time of Covid-19**

The safest way to shop is online delivery. You can pay ahead of time online and have the groceries delivered outside your door with no face-to-face contact. However, if you do go to the grocery store follow these tips:

- Take a disinfectant wipe with you each time you go out. This will remind you not to touch your face and will enable you to avoid touching surfaces, like door handles, that might contain Covid-19.
- When you get home, before touching anything in your house, wash your hands. Then use disinfectant wipes to wipe down your keys, phone, phone case, and door handles. Periodically disinfect your computer keyboard, faucet handles, light switches, and countertops.
- When bringing home take-out food, wipe down all containers. Consider avoiding foods that aren't cooked (like salads and uncooked vegetables). Wipe down all grocery items.