

# Baby Boomers

## AND FOOD SAFETY

About 1 in 6 Americans will get food poisoning each year. Older adults are at an increased risk of serious complications from foodborne illness. A few simple steps can help keep the golden years pleasant for you or older adults you help care for.



### What May Make You Sick?

Here's a look at some of the most common food pathogens that affect older adults and where they're found:

#### E. COLI O157:H7



Undercooked ground beef, unpasteurized milk and juices, contaminated raw fruits and vegetables, and water



Person-to-person contact

#### CAMPYLOBACTER



Unpasteurized (raw) milk

Raw or undercooked meat, poultry or shellfish

Untreated or contaminated water

#### SALMONELLA



Raw or undercooked eggs, poultry or meat

Unpasteurized (raw) milk or juice

Cheese and seafood

Fresh fruits and vegetables

### Why Are You at Risk?

Older adults are at elevated risk for hospitalization and death from foodborne infections. Why?



Medication side effects (like a weakened immune system)



Changes in functioning of organs like liver and kidneys



Underlying chronic conditions (such as diabetes or kidney disease)



Age-related changes to GI tract



### Product Dating

Dates printed on food labels indicate when items will no longer be at peak quality. Dates are not for safety. Here's what each one means:



**SELL BY:**  
03/12/15  
11:32 21-0141

**"SELL BY" DATE:**  
Buy the product before this date. It is safe to eat after this date.



**USE BY:**  
04/17/15  
11:32 21-0141

**BEST IF USED BY/USE-BY:**  
This is the last date recommended for best flavor or quality.

### When in doubt, throw it out.



Perishable food that has been held at unsafe temperatures can cause illness, regardless of the package date.

To learn more visit [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov) and search "product dating."

### Foods to Avoid



**SOFT CHEESES** made from unpasteurized milk (feta, brie, Camembert, blue-veined and queso fresco)



**RAW OR UNDERCOOKED MEAT, POULTRY, EGGS OR SEAFOOD**



**UNPASTEURIZED (raw) MILK**



**RAW SPROUTS**



**UNWASHED FRESH VEGETABLES**



**HOT DOGS, DELI MEATS AND LUNCHEON MEATS** that have not been heated to steaming hot



**PATES** – unpasteurized/refrigerated pates

### Safety Tips

The pathogens that cause foodborne illness can't be smelled or tasted. Proper food handling of the food you bring home is your best defense against food poisoning. *With all foods, follow these tips:*



**CLEAN:**  
Clean surfaces, utensils and hands with soap and warm water.



**SEPARATE:**  
Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from ready-to-eat foods in your grocery-shopping cart, refrigerator, and during meal prep.



**COOK:**  
Cooked food is safe only after it's been heated to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria. Use a food thermometer.



**CHILL:**  
Chill raw and prepared foods promptly if not consuming after cooking.



For more food safety tips, go to  
**—FoodSafety.gov—**  
USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER

**ADDITIONAL SOURCE**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/features/dsfoodborneestimates/>