

Food safety - what do you know?

Q1. True or false: If food looks ok and smells ok it's safe to eat

A.

Q2. True or false: Eating food after the 'best before' date won't hurt

A.

Q3. True or false: 'Use by' dates are there to make you buy more

A.

Q4. True or false: Stick to the 'five second rule' and you'll be ok

A.

Q5. True or false: Plastic chopping boards are more hygienic than wooden ones

A.

Q6. True or false: You don't need to wash raw chicken before you cook it

A.

Q7. True or false: If you've got a 'dodgy' stomach it's usually from the last thing you ate

A.

Q8. True or false: Most food poisoning is from 'dodgy' restaurants and takeaways

A.

Q9. True or false: Food poisoning isn't serious, it just means an upset stomach

A.

Q10. True or false: Steak's ok rare - as long as the outside is brown

A.

Q11. True or false: It's best to serve burgers pink in the middle

A.

Q12. True or false: Cooked rice can't be kept as long as other leftovers

A.



Answers

Q1. If food looks ok and smells ok it's safe to eat

False – it's a myth

Although a bad smell or taste are signs that food has 'gone off', these signs often aren't caused by germs that give you food poisoning. So the food's appearance, smell or taste aren't reliable warning signs. Instead, stick to the 'use by' date and storage instructions on the packet.

Q2. Eating food after the 'best before' date won't hurt

True – it's a food safety fact

'Best before' dates are about food quality not safety. They are usually found on food that lasts a long time. If food has passed its 'best before' date it doesn't mean it's unsafe, but it might have started to lose its colour, flavour or texture.

Q3. 'Use by' dates are there to make you buy more

False – it's a myth

A 'use by' date tells you how long food will stay safe. They have to be put on food that 'goes off' quickly – and they aren't just guesswork, the dates are worked out by scientific testing.

Don't be tempted to eat food after the 'use by' date on the label, even if it looks and smells fine.

Q4. Stick to the 'five second rule' and you'll be ok

False – it's a myth

We've all been there! That delicious slice of cake slips from your fingers and lands on the floor, and you think surely it will be ok if I pick it up quickly enough? Well unfortunately – no! However quickly you manage to retrieve it, any contact with the floor is long enough for the food to pick up nasty germs.

Q5. Plastic chopping boards are more hygienic than wooden ones

False – it's a myth

There isn't any strong evidence that one type of chopping board is more or less hygienic than another, whether plastic, wooden, glass or even marble. What is important is that the board gets cleaned properly after every use and is replaced if it gets damaged, for example from deep cuts or scoring. You could also use separate chopping boards for raw and ready-to-eat foods.

Q6. You don't need to wash raw chicken before you cook it

True – it's a food safety fact

Although most raw meat will have some germs on it, washing won't get rid of them. In fact, washing is more likely to spread germs around the kitchen. Little splashes of water can contaminate you, your worktops and anything else in the way. Thorough cooking is the only way to get rid of these nasty germs.



Q7. If you've got a 'dodgy' stomach it's usually from the last thing you ate

False – it's a myth

It's natural to suspect the thing you ate most recently would be the cause of food poisoning, but that isn't always the case. Symptoms usually take between one and three days to develop, so it won't necessarily be from the last thing you ate.

Q8. Most food poisoning is from 'dodgy' restaurants and takeaways

False – it's a myth

There's no specific evidence that food eaten out is more likely to cause food poisoning than food prepared at home, but it's easier to blame someone else. The habits we pick up from friends and family don't always ensure food is produced safely at home. As well as expecting good hygiene standards when eating out, we should also think about how to do things better at home.

Q9. Food poisoning isn't serious, it's just an upset stomach

False – it's a myth

Although most cases of food poisoning are mild and last only a day or two, some can be far more serious, even deadly. Thankfully this is rare, but with more than a million cases of food poisoning each year, twenty thousand of which require hospital treatment, every case is worth avoiding. Avoid food poisoning by remembering the simple 4Cs for good food hygiene: cleaning, cooking, chilling and cross-contamination.

Q10. Steak's ok rare – as long as the outside is brown

True – it's a food safety fact

Steak is safe to eat 'rare'. Whole cuts of beef or lamb, such as steaks, cutlets and joints only have germs on the outside, so as long as the outside is fully cooked any germs will be killed. But this isn't true for poultry, pork, burgers and sausages, these must be cooked all the way through.

Q11. It's best to serve burgers pink in the middle

False – it's a myth

Unlike steaks, burgers and sausages are made from meat that has been minced, so germs will be spread throughout the product and not just on the surface. This means these products need to be properly cooked all the way through. To check if a burger is done, cut into the thickest part and check there is no pink meat, it is steaming hot and juices are clear.

Q12. Cooked rice can't be kept as long as other leftovers

True – it's a food safety fact

Leftover cooked rice is fine to eat as long as it gets cooled and refrigerated quickly after cooking and eaten within 24 hours. This is because rice can contain a particularly tough type of bacteria that can survive heating. Most other leftovers are safe to eat up to two days after cooking. Always reheat leftovers until steaming hot and do not reheat more than once.