

Dietary Precautions for Patients with Low White Blood Cells

The following suggestions-when handling food may help reduce the risk for infection in patients with low white blood cells:

General Recommendations

- Wash your hands often to prevent the spread of bacteria.
- Wash dishtowels often and wash sponges in the dishwasher regularly. Sponges can also be boiled for five minutes to remove bacteria.
- Check dates on food and do not eat foods that are past the expiration date.
- Thaw foods in the refrigerator or microwave. Never thaw foods at room temperature. Cook foods immediately after thawing.
- Refrigerate all leftovers within two hours after cooking and eat them within 24 hours.
- Avoid wooden cutting boards. Choose plastic, glass, or rubber cutting boards and clean them thoroughly with antibacterial soap and hot water after each use.
- Use separate cutting boards for meat/fish and produce.
- Use separate dishes, cutting boards and utensils during meal preparation.
- Never reuse a dish that has held raw meat or fish before cleaning thoroughly with soap and water.
- Wash all fruits, vegetables, fresh herbs and spices thoroughly water. Rinse fruits and vegetables before peeling so dirt and bacteria are not transferred onto the fruit or vegetable.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure that foods are fully cooked to proper temperatures. Bacteria will grow between 40 -140 degrees Fahrenheit.

Foods to Avoid

- Rare or medium-rare cooked beef, pork, poultry and lamb
- Raw eggs, raw honey (unpasteurized), raw fish and shellfish such as sushi, clams and oysters
- Salad bars and buffets
- Deli sandwiches and pre-made salads
- Unpasteurized dairy products (including milk and some varieties of cheese)
- Unpasteurized ciders and juices

Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures as measured with a food thermometer

Beef, Pork, Veal, and Lamb (chops, roasts, steaks)	145 °F with a 3 minute rest time
Ground Meat	160 °F
Ham, uncooked (fresh or smoked)	145 °F with a 3 minute rest time
Ham, fully cooked (to reheat)	140 °F
Poultry (ground, parts, whole, and stuffing)	165 °F
Eggs	Cook until yolk and white are firm
Egg Dishes	160 °F
Fin Fish	145 °F or flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork
Shrimp, Lobster, and Crabs	Flesh is pearly and opaque
Clams, Oysters, and Mussels	Shells open during cooking
Scallops	Flesh is milky white or opaque and firm
Leftovers and Casseroles	165 °F

If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call 732-235-2465 and select the option that best meets your needs.