



The new rules of food safety

With recalls of potentially deadly foods in the news, it's time to rethink how we shop for and prep our meals

Peanut butter, burgers, spinach, and cookie dough. With those and so many other everyday foods on the recall list in recent years, it seems as though no matter what you buy at the grocery store, you could be putting your health—or even your life—on the line.

Each year 76 million people in the U.S. are sickened by food-borne illnesses and 5,000 die, estimates the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And despite all the food scares, the recalls just keep coming.

Some of the illnesses and deaths might have been prevented by, say, more thorough cooking or washing, but many are unavoidable. “After all, you can’t take your peanut butter home and scrub away the salmonella,” says Erik Olson, the director of Food and Consumer Product Safety Programs at The Pew Charitable

Trusts, a nonpartisan research group.

Stronger, better-coordinated food-safety oversight can help. Right now at least 15 government agencies are charged with making sure our food is safe under at least 30 different laws, some of which date back to the early 1900s. But two groups shoulder most of the responsibility. The Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service inspects our meat, poultry, eggs, and

many egg products, which account for about 20 percent of the food we eat. It has roughly 8,000 inspectors covering 6,300 domestic plants. The Food and Drug Administration covers most other foods, including milk, seafood, and produce. But it’s estimated that the FDA inspects food-processing facilities only every five to 10 years. It has 800 inspectors responsible for 420,000 domestic and foreign places where food is held, processed, or transported.

Even more surprising, regulators have no power to require recalls or, in some cases, safety records. In the past, the FDA has had to go so far as invoking antibiterrorism laws to pry food-safety info loose from manufacturers, who have at times sold food that they knew was contaminated. Making matters worse, we’re eating more foods from countries that don’t have the same safety standards as the U.S.

As we went to press, a new food-

safety bill had been passed by the House of Representatives, and a similar version was before the Senate. The Senate’s Food Safety Modernization Act would, among other things, give the FDA the authority to mandate recalls, require food processors to develop a food-safety plan, improve the oversight of imported food and food ingredients, and increase inspections of domestic food-processing facilities. (Consumers Union, the nonprofit publisher of ShopSmart, is a member of the Make Our Food Safe coalition, a group that is working to get that legislation passed. To find out what you can do to help, go to www.NotInMyFood.org.)

If the law is passed, it will make our food supply safer, but staying safe depends on you, too. To help you avoid getting sick from contaminated food, we interviewed experts for steps you can take to reduce your risk when you shop for, prepare, and cook your food.

The risky list

The products below accounted for more than 100,000 illnesses linked to a specific food between 1990 and 2006. We were surprised to see that there were more problems with fruits and veggies than with poultry and beef combined!

PRODUCE 35,060

14,743 from vegetables; 7,802 from fruit; 12,515 from produce dishes

POULTRY 18,906

5,301 from chicken; 5,616 from turkey; 7,875 from poultry dishes; 114 from other birds, such as duck or game hens

BEEF 14,191

3,370 from ground beef; 4,278 from beef dishes; 6,543 from other cuts of beef

SEAFOOD 11,809

3,794 from shellfish; 3,391 from finfish; 3,715 from seafood dishes; 909 from other seafood

EGGS 11,143

1,747 from eggs; 9,396 from egg dishes

DELI & OTHER MEATS 7,108

2,289 from deli meats and hot dogs; 2,476 from meat dishes, including pizza; 2,343 from other meats, such as lamb and sausage

BAKERY 4,904

3,832 from bakery goods such as cake, pie, and cheesecake; 1,072 from bread

BEVERAGES 3,640

1,737 from juice (one-third were unpasteurized); 1,903 from other beverages, such as soda, punch, and tea

Source: Center for Science in the Public Interest.



Supermarket smarts

It's not just what you buy but how you buy it. Here are important safety tips for every aisle of the grocery store.

Before we get to our food-specific shopping tips, here's a four-step safety game plan to get you started:

1. PREP BEFORE YOU SHOP. Next time you head to the store, throw a cooler with ice packs into your car. Then if you have a bunch of errands to run or it's hot outside, you will be able to keep perishable foods from warming up in your car. If you forget a cooler, ask the butcher or fishmonger for some ice in a plastic bag. Also, put sanitizing wipes that contain alcohol in your purse.

2. CLEAN YOUR CART. As you enter the store, wipe the handles with your wipes. Germs might be lurking there. The wipes will help you prevent transferring those bugs from your hands to the food you're buying, which is especially important when it comes to the produce you'll be eating raw. Wiping your hands on the way out can help you banish germs you've picked up while shopping.

3. SHOP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STORE FIRST. This is generally where you'll find drinks and packaged goods,

Canned foods & storage containers

■ **Inspect cans for damage.** Bulges, leaks, and rust can put you at risk of botulism, a potentially fatal illness.

■ **Cut back on canned food.** The chemical bisphenol A (BPA) is used in some hard, clear plastic bottles and most can liners. Some studies have linked it to reproductive abnormalities and a higher risk of breast and prostate cancers, diabetes, and heart disease. Our tests of canned foods, including soups, juice, tuna, and green beans, found that almost all of our samples contain some BPA. So buy fresh foods whenever you can.

■ **Avoid problem plastics.** When buying food-storage containers, look for recycling codes. Avoid those marked with No. 7 and the letters "PC," and unmarked hard, see-through plastic ones, which could potentially be made with BPA. Also, avoid plastic bottles and vinyl-lined lunch boxes made with PVC, which might leach other hazardous chemicals when they touch food. Those might be marked a No. 3. Deli cling wraps often fall into this category, so rewrap deli foods when you get them home.

which can sit in your cart for a while. Then you can hit the produce and bulk-food aisles.

4. SAVE STUFF THAT NEEDS TO BE KEPT COLD—MEAT, FISH, EGGS, MILK, AND DELI MEATS—FOR THE END.

Pick up frozen foods last and keep them together. Also, separate meat, poultry, and other items in your cart to avoid cross-contamination. Give cleaning supplies their own area, in case they spring a leak. Make sure items you've kept apart are bagged separately, too.

Frozen foods

■ **Choose hard, cold packages.** If not maintained properly, supermarket freezers could contain foods that have been partially thawed and might even be warm to the touch. Warmed-up containers can lead to an increased risk of food-poisoning from growing micro-organisms.

■ **Lean in.** Select frozen foods from the back of the freezer case; those items usually remain the coldest and most frozen.

■ **Look for telltale drips.** They're one sign that the food inside has thawed or melted, which could make them more vulnerable to bacteria growth. So if, say, an ice-cream container or yogurt has a stream down the side, put it back and find one that doesn't.

Fruits & veggies

■ **Don't buy it if it's moldy or bruised.** Soft spots are contamination petri dishes, says Sarah Klein, an attorney for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a nonprofit consumer-advocacy group. For example, if a tomato has cuts or bruises and salmonella was on the outside, it can migrate inside the fruit, where it can survive even if the tomato is washed thoroughly.

■ **Buy local when possible.** That's no guarantee of safety, but if produce is shipped over a long distance, there's more time for a bacterium such as salmonella to grow. Find a local farmer's market at apps.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets, www.localharvest.org, or www.eatwellguide.org.

■ **Check "use by" dates on bagged greens and other prepackaged produce.** In a recent test, we found higher levels of some bacteria in prewashed packages of salad that were one to five days from their use-by date. Packages that were six to eight days from their use-by dates were cleaner.

■ **Consider certain organics.** Some produce carries relatively high levels of pesticide residue even after washing. Consider buying organic when it comes to apples, bell peppers, celery, cherries, imported grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, potatoes, red raspberries, spinach, and strawberries.

Bakery goods

■ **Keep them chilled.** Make sure that bakery foods with dairy products such as cheesecake, cheese Danish pastries, and some pies stay cold until you can get them home and put them in the fridge.

■ **Peek in the package.** Look inside to make sure you can't see any mold forming.



KEEP UP-TO-DATE ON SAFETY ALERTS!

Sign up for recall and safety updates at www.recalls.gov/food.html or go to www.foodsafety.gov. Regularly scanning recalls will help you avoid risky foods at the store—and in your cabinet.



WHERE IN THE WORLD?

New rules that require country-of-origin labeling on many meats and other foods give you the chance to see where your chow came from.

Raw meat & poultry

■ **Double-bag it.** Treat all meat and poultry as if it's contaminated—because it might be. Our test of fresh, whole broiler chickens found that two-thirds contained bacteria that cause the most food-borne illnesses. "Although this is a little gross, you should pick them up like you would dog poop," Klein says. "Put your hand in a plastic bag, then fold it back over the food container without touching it." Many stores have plastic bags near the meat cases; if yours doesn't, you can grab some from the produce aisle.

■ **Wash your hands.** If they come into contact with even the packaging around a meat or poultry item, wash up or use an alcohol wipe to prevent spreading bugs to other foods.

■ **Get meat ground fresh.** Cuts of meat come from just one animal, so they might be less contaminated.

■ **Don't pick a pretenderized cut.** Many cuts are now put through a machine that tenderizes it by piercing it with tiny needles. But that might also spread contamination that was limited to the outside of the meat into the center. You can't always tell by

looking whether meat has been tenderized, so ask.

■ **Pick cold, dry packages.** Reach deep into the bottom of the cold case.

■ **Check the date.** Choose the package with the latest date. You should buy meat and fish before the sell-by date and generally either use it within a day or so or freeze it.

■ **Look for the "Safe Food Handling" label.** It doesn't guarantee that the item is bacteria-free, but it will include handling and cooking tips.

■ **Don't judge meat by its color.** Carbon monoxide is sometimes used in packaging to keep meat looking red and fresh, even when it's not. So check dates! Look for the latest date, and use the meat within a day or so or freeze it.

■ **Consider organics.** You might be able to cut your odds of exposure to the agent believed to cause mad cow disease and minimize other toxins used in nonorganic feed. You also avoid antibiotics.

■ **Sniff it for freshness.** If meat doesn't smell fresh, don't buy it! But be aware that even if it smells OK, it could still be loaded with bacteria.

Deli meats & salads

■ **Buy freshly made prepared foods.**

Ask whether the macaroni salad or other things you buy were made that day. If a clerk says yes but you see bits of crust around the edges, take a pass. Everything behind the counter should be refrigerated or on ice. Check for the latest use-by date possible on containers of premade foods in chilled cases, and make sure they feel cold.

■ **Check out food-handling habits.**

A clean floor and staffers wiping down slicers between orders doesn't guarantee your safety, but it can't hurt. Staffers should also be wearing gloves when handling food.

■ **Avoid nitrites when possible.**

Those chemicals help preserve meat, but they can be converted into carcinogens by the stomach. And some studies have linked the high intake of nitrites to an increased risk of stomach and pancreatic cancer. Any increased risk from cold cuts is probably small, and eating plenty of green veggies and fruits with vitamin C appears to erase any added cancer risk. But if you're still concerned, ask the deli clerk for cold cuts and other meats that are nitrite-free.

■ **Consider heating up cold cuts.**

Listeria, a hardy bacteria that can cause stillbirths or birth defects, is most often found in ready-to-eat processed foods such as deli meats and hot dogs, as well as unpasteurized cheese. "Listeria is hard to eradicate from an area, including deli slicers, plastic containers, and the counter itself," Klein says. "So people at high risk for food poisoning, and especially pregnant women, should heat deli meat until it's steaming hot and stay away from unpasteurized cheese."

Dairy products

■ **Buy everything pasteurized.**

"Many producers of raw milk are very careful how they produce it, but it's a risky product that can easily be contaminated with campylobacter, salmonella, or E. coli," Klein says. She also suggests that you consider liquid pasteurized eggs if you'll be eating them raw (as in homemade cookie dough). But you might not want to opt for ultrapasteurized milk. Some groups have raised concerns about it. Says Patty Lovera, deputy director of the nonprofit group Food and Water Watch, "It's heated at a higher temperature to give it a longer shelf life so it can be shipped further, but we don't yet know what that does to the milk."

■ **Pick milk with "rBGH free" or "no artificial growth hormones" on the label.** Injecting cows with recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH) increases milk

output but also increases lameness and udder infections; whether it is harmful to humans has not been definitively determined. But an internal government report in Canada noted that there have been no long-term studies on whether it causes sterility, birth defects, or cancer in humans, and Canada did not approve it. Other studies linked a hormone that is increased in milk from rBGH-treated cows to an increased incidence of prostate and breast cancer.

■ **Check the "sell by" date.** Select the latest dates, and choose items from the back of the case.

■ **Choose cold egg cartons.** Make sure the eggs are clean, unbroken, and not stuck to the bottom of the carton. Look for the latest sell-by dates.

■ **Look for dry dairy cartons.** Milk on the outside can be bacterial breeding grounds.



WHAT FOOD PRODUCT DATES REALLY MEAN

"SELL" OR "PULL" DATE is used by grocery stores so that they can decide how long to keep food products on the shelf. Many products should still be safe three to seven days after the sell-by date if they've been stored properly.

"BEST IF USED BY" DATE is a manufacturer's date. Use the product by that date for top quality and flavor.

EXPIRATION DATE should be checked while you're in the store so that you don't buy a product that has expired or is close to expiring. Discard items on your shelves if that date has passed, or you might risk getting sick, or worse.



Drinks

■ **Buy pasteurized juices.**

Pasteurized means that it's heated to kill pathogens. Fresh-squeezed juice and some ciders aren't pasteurized, so they're riskier, especially for young kids, seniors, pregnant women, and anyone with a compromised immune system.

■ **Consider alternatives to canned juices and liquid baby formula.** BPA is in the linings of some cans.

Fish & shellfish

- **Cut back on fish high in mercury.** This includes king mackerel, shark, swordfish, and tilefish. Also avoid tuna (canned and fresh) if you're pregnant. Check our list of how often it's safe to eat different fish by going to www.ConsumerReports.org/health and searching for "benefits of fish" and clicking on the first entry.
- **Handle seafood packages like meat.** Use bags to cover it, and clean up if you touch any packaging or juices.
- **Make sure it's fresh.** The flesh should be shiny and firm and not separating from the bone.
- **Ask whether you can have a sniff.** It shouldn't smell overly fishy. When certain fish begin to decay, Klein says, "you can end up with a toxin called scombrototoxin, which cannot be eliminated, even by cooking."
- **Get it chilled.** Seafood displayed in a case should be on ice but free of ice crystals, which indicate the seafood has previously thawed.
- **Keep prepared items separate.** Buy cooked seafood such as shrimp, crab, or smoked fish only if it is separated from raw fish to prevent cross-contamination.
- **Buy wild salmon when possible.** Some tests suggest that farm-raised salmon might contain high levels of PCBs, a possible carcinogen.
- **Avoid shellfish, especially oysters, from warm waters such as the Gulf of Mexico.** It runs the risk of containing *Vibrio* bacteria. "Vibrio affects fewer people than many contaminants, but it kills half of the people that do get sick," Klein says. Look for processed seafood, which has been steam-heated.



Bulk foods

- **Look for clean bins.** Skip bins with lots of dust or crumbs at the bottom, which indicates that they are not emptied or cleaned out often. Also try to stick with bins that are high enough to be out of reach of curious (and perhaps less-than-clean) toddlers—bacteria can spread from hand to scoop.
- **Skip the scoops.** Try to buy bulk foods from stores that have gravity-fed bins (the kind of container that releases the contents only when you pull a lever). People can't stick their hands in the food, and they're forced to take the older stuff first. (But still make sure the bin looks clean!)

THE 8 DOS & DON'TS OF PUTTING AWAY GROCERIES

- 1. DON'T TAKE YOUR TIME!** Put perishables in the fridge or freezer as soon as you get home. They can start to spoil in as little as one hour.
- 2. DO PUT THINGS IN THE RIGHT PLACE.** Milk should go in the back, where it's coldest. Keep old containers no more than a week after the sell-by date. Keep eggs in their carton in the back of the fridge, too, not in the door. They last three to five weeks. Securely wrap and place raw fish, meat, and poultry on plates on lower shelves in the back, where it's coldest and they're not going to drip on and contaminate other foods. If you're not using them right away, freeze them. Seafood, meat, and poultry should be kept no longer than a couple of days in the fridge. Open deli meats last three to five days in the fridge.
- 3. DO CHECK YOUR FRIDGE TEMP.** Your fridge and freezer should be 37° to 38° F and 0° F, respectively.
- 4. DON'T OVERSTUFF.** Allowing room for air to circulate in your fridge and freezer ensures that things stay cold enough. Also, don't stack meats on top of each other in the freezer.
- 5. DO PACK IT UP.** Moisture- and vapor-proof materials such as airtight containers are best at keeping food such as cold cuts, cheese, and fresh berries from spoiling quickly.
- 6. DO PUT NUTS IN THE FREEZER.** The oils in them can turn rancid in as little as a month. So if you don't plan to use them right away, freeze them.
- 7. DON'T PUT FOOD AWAY IN A DIRTY FRIDGE OR CUPBOARDS.** Periodically scrub your fridge and cupboards to remove spills and residue that might attract bugs. Use a permanent marker to date any new items you store that don't have a "use by" date, such as bulk foods. And while you're in there, get rid of any expired foods.
- 8. DO USE THE "FIRST IN, FIRST OUT" RULE.** Store new items in your pantry in the back. Use the oldest unexpired products in the front first.

Kitchen critical

How to avoid the most dangerous food-prep mistakes

The first step is to make sure you have the right tools. Here are the essentials:

THERMOMETERS Put an appliance thermometer in your fridge and freezer to make sure they're running at the right temp (noted on the facing page), and get a meat thermometer to ensure that food is cooked enough to kill disease-causing salmonella and E. coli and other potentially lethal bugs. (See temperature chart at right.) We tested 11 meat thermometers; the top instant-read model was the Taylor Weekend Warrior 806, \$16. If you want one that will beep when, say, a roast reaches the right temp, the Polder THM-360, \$30, is the most accurate leave-in model we tested.

CUTTING BOARDS Use different ones for produce, meat and poultry, and seafood to prevent cross-contamination.

Solid-wood cutting boards are as safe to use as plastic ones. But toss worn or cracked ones; bugs can hide out in the crannies.

ICE PACKS They can be tossed in a cooler or reusable bags to keep food cool during transport. Foods that need to be kept cold while you serve them should be served on ice. Those include foods that contain eggs, such as mayo.

HYDROGEN PEROXIDE AND VINEGAR Keep cutting boards, knives, and countertops sanitized by spraying them with vinegar, then with 3 percent hydrogen peroxide after you've washed them with hot, soapy water. Keep the liquids in separate spray bottles, and use them one at a time. Wipe your kitchen tools with a clean towel after each spritz.



TAKE YOUR FOOD'S TEMPERATURE

When you're cooking meat, place thermometers in the thickest part without touching bone, fat, or gristle. If you're heating premade foods such as frozen dinners, follow package instructions exactly, including the time food is supposed to rest, and be sure it reaches 165° F.

Food	Cook until ...
Eggs	yolk and whites are firm
Egg dishes, sauces, and custards	160° F
Ground turkey and chicken	165° F
Ground beef, lamb, pork, veal	160° F
Fresh beef, lamb, and veal	145° F
Fresh pork	160° F
Ham	160° F (fresh, raw); 140° F (fully cooked, to reheat)
Leftovers	165° F
Poultry	165° F
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165° F
Sauces, soups, gravies, and marinades (used with raw meats, poultry, or fish)	they boil
Finfish	they're opaque and they flake easily with a fork
Shrimp, lobster, and crab	they turn red and flesh becomes opaque
Scallops	they turn milky white, opaque, and firm
Shellfish	the shells open



Proper prepping & cooking

■ Keep raw foods separate from cooked and prepackaged foods.

It's easy to cross-contaminate foods. It could be especially dangerous if bacteria from raw food touches ready-to-eat foods.

■ **Wash up often.** Wash hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Also wash dishes, platters, and cutting boards with hot, soapy water after preparing each food.

■ **Clean your food properly.** If you're eating produce raw, always wash it before you cut it to get rid of external bacteria and dirt. Use a scrub brush to get into the nooks and crannies of rough items such as cantaloupes. Don't neglect to wash all melons, as well as fruits with peels. All fruit skins can carry bacteria that can spread during eating, cutting, or peeling. Also, remove the outer leaves of leafy vegetables such as salad greens, where dirt can be hanging out. And wash greens even if they come in a bag or plastic clamshell labeled "triple washed" or "prewashed." We recently tested 208 containers of those greens from 16 brands. We

didn't find pathogens such as E. coli and salmonella. But we did find that up to 39 percent of the samples, which included organics, exceeded acceptable levels of some bacteria that are common indicators of poor sanitation and fecal contamination.

■ Don't wash meat and fish.

That will probably just spread contaminants to your sink and countertop. Put meats directly into cooking vessels.

■ **Thaw it right.** Always thaw frozen foods in the fridge, in a bowl of cool water, or if you need it fast, in the microwave oven, but then cook it right away. Never thaw on a countertop! While the inside is still frozen, the outside can warm up, creating a bacteria breeding ground.

■ **Try cooking things you'd normally eat raw, especially sprouts.** In 2009, tests found listeria in bean and soy sprouts and salmonella in alfalfa sprouts.

■ Don't eat cookie dough and other foods meant to be cooked.

Thoroughly cook hot dogs, pot pies, and chicken, even if it has grill marks and looks precooked.

Keep your kitchen tools safe & clean

■ **Kill germs on sponges and (nonsteel) scrubbing pads.** Those kitchen essentials are convenient and reusable. But even after a few passes over the counter, they can pick up a lot of bacteria and viruses along with the spills, splatters, and pan goop. You'll kill most germs in a sponge or scrubbing pad by microwaving it for 2 minutes (make sure they're wet), or you can clean them in the utility basket of your dishwasher, then let them dry thoroughly.

■ **Remember your pot holders and dish towels.** After you buy them, wash them before using. Then wash them often; if they come into contact with raw food juices, wash them immediately.

■ **Clean can openers frequently.** That will minimize the chance that you'll contaminate the can contents while you're opening it. Also, avoid getting bacteria from can lids into your food by rinsing off each can, bottle, and jar before opening.

■ **Never ever use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked foods!** Be especially careful not to place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood.

DRIP ALERT!

Use spill-proof containers for leftover meat, poultry, or fish so that when you thaw them in the fridge they won't leak onto other food. Their juices could be contaminated with dangerous bacteria.

The right way to handle leftovers

■ **Chill that moo shu!** Refrigerate (or freeze) leftovers within 2 hours of serving to reduce your risk of food-borne illnesses (within 1 hour if it's above 90° F). If hot, refrigerate them in several shallow containers instead of one large clump to allow them to cool down quickly. You have three to four days to safely finish eating them.

■ **Give frozen leftovers enough space.** To reduce the risk of food poisoning in leftovers you freeze, don't stack them in the freezer until they're completely frozen. Divide large portions into small amounts and store them in shallow containers.

■ **Remember, the clock is ticking.** Casseroles, stews, and most other frozen leftovers should be tossed after

two to three months, or their quality starts to go downhill. Don't forget to label and date containers with a waterproof marker so you can tell what's what and when each should be tossed.

■ **Be nice to kitty.** Don't get rid of leftovers or take-out food that should be tossed by feeding it to your pets. Your critters can get food-borne illnesses, too.

9 FOODS TO HANDLE WITH EXTREME CARE

When you feel sick to your stomach, you might be quick to assume that you've picked up a cold or flu bug. But what you might be suffering from is food poisoning, which can be deadly. Symptoms can include stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, and bloody or routine diarrhea along with chills and fever. If you develop those symptoms, call your physician

right away. Here's a list of foods that might put you at more risk, so our experts say you should be extra careful buying and handling them. If someone more susceptible to food poisoning is in your household—young children, seniors, pregnant women, or anyone with a compromised immune system—you might want to avoid many of them entirely.

Food	Potential risk	How to prevent illness
Raw or undercooked poultry and poultry products such as frozen pot pies	Salmonella and/or campylobacter.	Use a thermometer to ensure that poultry is heated to 165° F.
Raw or undercooked beef and ground meat, and meat products such as hot dogs	E. coli or listeria.	Cook beef and beef products to an internal temperature of at least 145° F. Ground beef should be cooked to at least 160° F.
Vegetables and fruit eaten raw, (in particular leafy greens, berries, cantaloupe, sprouts, and tomatoes)	Norovirus, salmonella, or E. coli. Cantaloupes are particularly tricky because all the nooks and crannies make thorough cleaning very difficult.	Rinse well under water; consider cooking in dishes. Rinse cut pieces to reduce risk. Clean cantaloupes with a brush, getting into nooks and crannies as much as possible.
Fish high in mercury	Mercury exposure, which can damage brain development in fetuses and young children.	See the list of high-mercury fishes at www.greenerchoices.org/fishbuyguide .
Raw or undercooked shellfish, particularly oysters	Vibrio, which generally causes mild infections, but one strain can lead to severe shock. People who are immunocompromised are 80 times more likely to become infected with the more serious—and even deadly—strain.	Eat only pasteurized or cooked oysters, or ones from the cold waters of the Pacific Northwest or Northeast.
Raw milk and unpasteurized eggs and cheeses	Salmonella, E. coli, or listeria.	Buy pasteurized versions.
Honey	Botulism risk for infants.	Do not feed to kids under 1 year old.
Canned foods	Some studies link bisphenol A (BPA) exposure to reproductive abnormalities and a higher risk of breast and prostate cancers, diabetes, and heart disease	Use fresh or frozen products instead when possible.
Salads or dishes made with raw eggs	Salmonella.	Use brands that contain pasteurized eggs. If making your own, consider using pasteurized eggs. Make sure those foods are served on ice and are not left unrefrigerated for more than 1 hour.