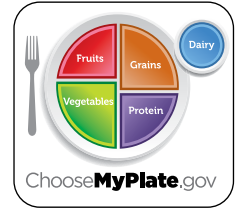


**10 tips**  
Nutrition  
Education Series

# food safety tips for preschoolers



## 10 tips to keep food safe and clean

**Keeping your preschooler safe is your number one priority.** Building safe habits will be valuable throughout their lives. Follow these simple tips to keep food safe and clean for your preschooler.

**1 develop a healthy habit for life**  
Encourage handwashing after using the bathroom, before and after eating, after playing with pets, or whenever they are dirty. **Preschoolers are less likely to get sick if they wash their hands often.** Keep a stool by the sink to make handwashing easier.



**2 make handwashing fun!**  
Sing “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” or the “Alphabet” song or count for 20 seconds each time to make sure your child is washing long enough. Have them pick out a favorite soap to keep them interested.

**3 send a safe, healthy lunch**  
Keep foods cold by adding a frozen juice box or small ice pack to an insulated lunch box. When using paper lunch bags, double bag to help maintain the temperature.

**4 keep hot lunches hot**  
Use an insulated thermos to keep foods like soup warm until lunchtime. Fill your thermos with boiling water and let stand for a few minutes. Then empty the water and fill with piping hot food.



**5 safe snacking**  
Many hands touching snacks can result in the spread of germs. Divide snacks up into small bags or buy single-serve packets. Rinse fruits and vegetables before slicing and serving them as snacks.

**6 stay clean**  
Young children can easily get sick because their immune systems are not fully developed. Keep food and surfaces clean. Wash surfaces before and after you prepare foods like fish, meat, eggs, and cheese for your preschooler.

**7 holiday eggs**  
Hard-cooked eggs are a fun tradition for many families. After boiling eggs, dye them in food-safe coloring and return them to the refrigerator within 2 hours to keep them safe to eat.

**8 some foods are hard to swallow**  
Avoid foods that are hard to swallow or cut them into small pieces, about 1/2 inch. Hard-to-swallow foods can include peanuts, popcorn, round slices of hot dog, hard candy, whole grapes, and cherry tomatoes.



**9 watch how they eat**  
To prevent choking, have your preschoolers sit down when they eat. Avoid letting them run, walk, play, or lie down with food in their mouth.

**10 seafood for preschoolers**  
Omega-3 fats in fish and shellfish have important health benefits for young children. But be aware of chemicals such as mercury. Choices that are often lower in mercury include salmon, sardines, tilapia, trout, pollock, and catfish.