Food safety begins when food is purchased, so plan your shopping trip to prevent foodborne illnesses.

**How clean is your shopping cart?**

- Shopping areas and carts are covered with germs from hands, shoes, leaky meat packages, and leaky diapers.
- Be safe and sanitize the cart before using.
- Wash your hands after shopping and before storing items.

**Should I reuse plastic shopping bags?**

- NO, used bags may be contaminated with juices from leaky food or meat packages; dispose of all bags that held raw meat.
- Launder reusable cloth bags after use.

**At the store:**

- Buy non-perishable food first and cold or frozen foods last.
- Separate foods in the cart:
  - Place all meat items in a disposable plastic bag before placing in your cart.
  - Keep raw meat, poultry, or seafood juices away from other foods.
  - Separate food products from cleaning products.
- Read the product dates:
  - Do not buy foods past the use by date.
- Inspect packaging:
  - Do not buy products with torn or leaky packaging.
  - Ensure food is refrigerated and/or frozen.
- Buy clean eggs free from cracks.
- Inspect fruits and vegetables:
  - Avoid fruits and vegetables that are bruised or damaged.
  - Only buy cut or prepared fruits and vegetables from a refrigerated case, especially cut melons.

**Go straight home and put food away:**

- Refrigerate perishable foods within 2 hours.
- If outdoor temperatures are >90°F, refrigerate perishables within 1 hour.
- Use coolers or insulated bags to hold foods cold longer.

**Did you know—**

- The number of bacteria can double in as little as 20 minutes, given the right conditions.

**While shopping beware of cans or jars that are—**

- Leaking, bulging, cracked, or dented.
- Loose or bulging lids.
- Giving off foul odors.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Be Food Safe.