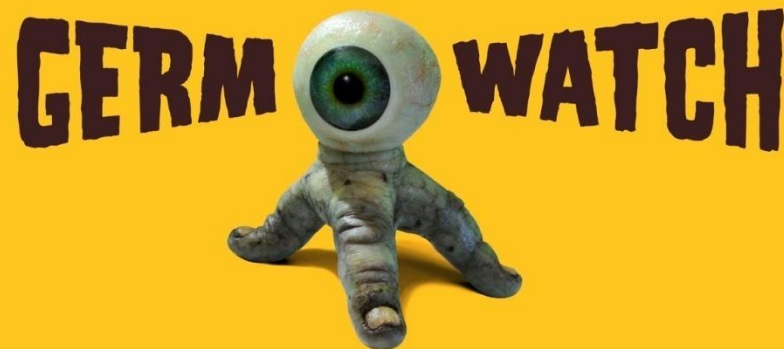


Food Safety – What do you know?





Question 1

TRUE OR FALSE:

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. Germs that cause food poisoning don't always change the food's appearance, smell or taste.

Instead, stick to the 'use by' date and storage instructions on the packet.



Question 2

TRUE OR FALSE:

Eating food after the 'best before' date won't do you any harm.



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, such as frozen, dried or canned foods.

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.



Question 3

TRUE OR FALSE

‘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 guess work, 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 – you could be putting your, and your family's, health at risk.



Question 4

TRUE OR FALSE

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 retrieve it, any contact with the floor is long enough for the food to pick up nasty germs, fluff or dust.

You should throw it away and clean up where it fell. You know you should.



Question 5

TRUE OR FALSE:

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, because this will hinder proper cleaning.

You can also stop germs spreading by having separate chopping boards for raw and ready-to-eat foods.



Question 6

TRUE OR FALSE:

You don't need to wash 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 – that's what cooking is for. In fact, washing is more likely to spread germs around the kitchen than get rid of them.

Little splashes of water from washing meat and poultry can land a metre away from the sink, contaminating you, your worktops and anything else in the way. Thorough cooking is the only way to get rid of these nasty little germs.



Question 7

TRUE OR FALSE:

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 that the thing you ate most recently would be the cause of the food poisoning, but that isn't always the case.

You usually feel ok immediately after eating the offending food, but symptoms will develop between one and three days later – so it won't necessarily be due to the last thing you ate.

Food poisoning bugs take time to multiply to a level where they will make you sick.



Question 8

TRUE OR FALSE:

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



False – it's a myth

There is no specific evidence to support people's general perception that food eaten out is more likely to cause food poisoning than food prepared at home, but it's always easier to think that someone else is to blame.

Most people are confident that the way they prepare food is safe, but the habits we pick up from friends and family don't always ensure food is prepared safely.

As well as expecting good hygiene standards when eating out, we should also think about how we do things better at home.



Question 9

TRUE OR FALSE

Food poisoning isn't serious, it just means 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. Severe symptoms can include kidney failure, reactive arthritis or paralysis.

Thankfully these consequences are 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.



Question 10

TRUE OR FALSE

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 and pork, or products such as sausages, these can have germs in the centre so must be cooked all the way through.



Question 11

TRUE OR FALSE

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 that these products need to be properly cooked all the way through, otherwise bugs could survive and give you food poisoning.

To check if a burger or sausage is done, cut into the thickest part and check that there is no pink meat, it is steaming hot in the middle and that the juices are clear.



Question 12

TRUE OR FALSE

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. This is because rice can contain a particularly tough type of bacteria that can survive heating.

To stop these bacteria growing, special care should be taken to make sure rice is cooled and refrigerated (ideally within one hour) and eaten within 24 hours.

Most other leftovers are safe to eat up to two days after cooking – as long as they are reheated until steaming hot and not reheated more than once.