Food Safety On The Home Front

What comes to mind when you think of a clean kitchen? Shiny waxed floors? Spotless counters and neatly arranged cupboards?

These things are important, but a truly "clean" kitchen—that is, one that ensures safe food—relies on more than just looks: It also depends on safe food practices.

Some safe food basics are:

• Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before handling all food. Wash hands—and utensils—after handling raw meat, poultry and seafood.

• Don't let raw foods such as meat, poultry and seafood touch ready-to-eat foods such as raw vegetables and already cooked dishes.

• Use a meat thermometer to see if cooked meat, fish and poultry have reached a safe temperature.

• Refrigerate perishables and cooked foods within two hours—the sooner, the better.

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