

# Food Safety for Seniors

Older people need a healthy diet. It can help them avoid sickness. A healthy diet includes a range of foods. But raw foods are risky because they can have a lot of germs in them.

## Why do seniors get sick from raw foods?

As we age, it can get harder and harder to fight off germs. As you age, it's easier to get sick from germs in your food. Having diabetes, kidney disease, or some cancer treatments also may add to your risk.

## What foods should I avoid?

- Raw fish
- Raw shellfish, such as oysters, clams, mussels, and scallops
- Raw meat or poultry
- Raw or unpasteurized milk or cheese

- Soft cheeses such as feta, brie, blue, and Mexican-style
- Raw or lightly cooked eggs or egg products, such as salad dressings, cookie dough, cake batter, sauces, and drinks such as eggnog
- Raw sprouts
- Unpasteurized or untreated juice from fruits and veggies

In the U.S., almost all juice is treated to kill germs. This makes it safe to drink. The FDA requires a warning label on all juices that have not been treated. The label says:

**WARNING: This product has not been pasteurized and therefore may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with a weak immune system.**



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**FDA Office of Women's Health** <http://www.fda.gov/womens>

## To Learn More:

### **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**

Food Information and Seafood Hotline  
Phone: 1-888-SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366)

### **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

Meat and Poultry Hotline  
Phone: 1-800-535-4555

### **Partnership for Food Safety Education**

<http://www.fightbac.org>