



This is our weekly talk about how you can succeed with a kidney diet, brought to you by [RenalDietHQ.com](http://RenalDietHQ.com), a website whose mission is to be the most valued resource on kidney disease that people can use to improve their health.

Hello, welcome to the Renal Diet Headquarters podcast. This is your host Mathea Ford, this week we are doing podcast number 31. For more information go to the podcast at [www.renaldietHQ.com/031](http://www.renaldietHQ.com/031)

to find out more information about the links I talk about in this podcast. This week we are continuing our talk about food safety and keeping your items safe at home and travel.

This week I want to talk about some home food safety myths and facts. Those are some things that really can affect you as a person with a chronic illness. You need to do all you can to be safe. Sometimes we have little stories or things we have heard as a kid, that we just don't question, and they can actually be harmful.

So I want to talk about a few things to do to stay safe when cooking at home, or making items to travel.

Let's just get right into it. It will probably be a shorter podcast today, but we are going to talk about everything that is important.

#### Myth #1

I don't have to cook hamburgers done; they can be pink in the middle. One of the things about that is that, you need to cook hamburger to an internal temperature of 165°. So you might be thinking that it is okay to cook a steak rare in the middle, and the reality of the situation is that hamburger is ground meat, and so the outside surface of a steak, for example, is cooked and it kills off all the bacteria on the outside. But when you take a hamburger and you grind that steak up, you have the outside surface of the meat all throughout. So you need to cook it to the 165° so that it will cook completely and kill that bacteria. That is a very, very important part of the process.

I hear a lot of restaurants and they say do you want your hamburger well done or medium, that just makes me cringe. As a person with chronic kidney disease or any sort of chronic illness, you need to do everything you can to be careful and I would not suggest eating hamburgers that are cooked medium. Now a steak or other type of beef that is not cooked all the way, as long as it is a solid piece, that is fine because there is no bacteria inside the muscle unless it was penetrated with a tenderizer or something.

#### Myth #2

Running my hands under warm water is enough to clean them. Gosh how many times do I see this in the bathroom when I am washing my hands? Someone will just stick their hands under the warm water and kind of rubs them together. You don't see that dirt and bacteria that is on your hands that is on your hands. Every time you touch your dog, your hair, your nose, you smoke a cigarette, you pick up a pen, and you touch the door, all of that puts bacteria on your hands. You need to be super careful. What you need to do is, when you get ready to cook, you need to wash your hands with soap and rinse them with water, and dry them with a disposable towel. You have kitchen towels that you wipe your hands on throughout the day; those are not going to be free of bacteria because you might touch them with your dirty hands as well. Make sure you use soap and scrub your hands for 20 seconds. You don't have to use the antibacterial soap, any sort of lathering soap will do. I love to just keep a bar of soap right there because it is a lot easier to me then pumping and keeping that container full. But remember you are not going to see that dirt or bacteria that is on your hands. If you are in a public bathroom and you are done watching your hands, you need to keep that towel that you dried your hands with, and reach over and open that door with the towel so your hands don't touch that handle, because there is a lot of people that left the bathroom without washing their hands and they touched the handle so you are just getting bacteria back on your hands.

#### Myth #3

A little raw batter won't hurt me. Like cookie batter or cake batter. When I was young, we use to lick off the beaters. Just remember that eggs, the outside of an egg shell can carry salmonella and that is just not safe, you need to be really careful with that. I encourage you to not eat raw cake or cookie batter. Just remember, it is very good once it is cooked.

#### Myth #4

Heating snacks or meals in the microwave is good enough to kill germs. Yes microwaving can kill germs, but the reason why it kills germs is because the heat that is generated by the microwave kills the germs. It is not the actual microwave. Make sure that you get your food to hot enough, so you still have those recommended

temperatures, like 165° for hamburger or 140° for reheating certain things, or 160°. Make sure your food is hot enough. How a microwave works is it increases the activity of particles inside the liquid and those vibrations cause heat, then that heat moves from the center of the container to the outside, which is why a lot of times a microwave meal will say cook for 2 minutes then allow it to stand for a minute. That is because that heat moving to the outsides and evening out. A lot of times you have to stir a microwave product so that it will heat evenly, because it is difficult to get it to do that sometimes depending on the type of meal.

So just remember in the microwave you still have to heat to a certain temperature. And with water in a microwave, you have to be very careful because water does not always show that it is boiling and it can be extremely hot and it can sometimes break plastic or glass containers, so just be cautious when you are heating water in a microwave.

#### Myth #5

Bagged snacks don't have to be washed. If something comes in a bag, you may think that everything is good because it is already cut up and everything, like lettuce or whatever, just make sure that it says ready to eat or says that it is triple washed or washed on the package. There are still some things out there that don't say that, for example, strawberries. If you buy a little container of strawberries, unless it says washed and ready to eat, you need to wash them prior to eating because they are not prepared that way; they are just put in the container. So that makes them not quite as ready to eat so you may get confused and think that these were ready to eat but they were not. Another thing is like baby carrots. You want to watch and look at the bag and make sure it says they are ready to eat.

#### Myth #6

There is something that I grew up doing that is definitely not safe, that is going to be to make sure if you have leftovers or items that are not going to be eaten right away. Make sure you are putting them into the refrigerator, and that is important so that the temperature cools down and stops the bacteria growth. We use to leave the turkey setting out on the counter for a couple hours or we left pizza out. I learned my lesson one time because we left pizza out from dinner, it was like 1 o'clock in the morning, and I ate some, and I got so violently ill from that pizza. I had to go to the hospital. I just recommend that once everyone gets their food, that 20 minutes or so while your are eating your meal is fine, but then as soon as you are done with the meal, get up and put that food into containers that are smaller and more appropriate in size, store it so that it is not just sitting out on the counter for a couple of hours.

That keeps the bacteria from growing too quickly, and putting it in the fridge and cooling it down slows the bacteria growth.

Today we talked a lot about some home food safety things that people just kind of believe because they have heard them over time. Maybe they have never gotten sick from doing these things, I want you to be aware that even though you may not have gotten sick in the past, as your health is concerned, if you have chronic illness, you are higher risk and you need to be extra cautious. So just try to do what you can to be safer with meals, safer with eating.

If you take items out for a picnic, take a cooler, put those things that need to stay cold in the cooler, and when it is time to do your picnic, grab it, and use it them. Just don't leave them in a picnic basket for hours without any cooling method.

So have a great week, I look forward to talking to you again next week. Remember you can find the information we talked about today at [www.renaldietHQ.com/031](http://www.renaldietHQ.com/031) and I will talk to you again soon.

Thank you!

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