

# Love Serves Safely



## Food Safety Tips for Our Shared Church Meals

*Inspired by careful preparation and love – "Let all that you do be done in love"  
(1 Corinthians 16:14)*



[mattmeinke.com](http://mattmeinke.com)



[askanadventistfriend.com](http://askanadventistfriend.com)



[msn.com](https://www.msn.com)

Sharing a meal every time we gather is one of the sweetest expressions of our church family's love and fellowship. Just as the early church broke bread together with glad hearts (Acts 2:46), we bring dishes from home to enjoy together. These simple food-safety habits help us protect one another and honor God through thoughtful stewardship.

**Remember our joyful reminder after prayer: "Loving Jesus is Washing Your Hands!"**

# 1. Keep Food Out of the “Danger Zone”

**Cooking for Groups**

**Reheating Food**  
Reheat cooked food to at least **165 °F**  
In the microwave  
On the stove top  
In the oven

**Keep Hot Food Hot**  
Cooked food should be held at or above **140 °F**  
Use heated chafing dishes, warming trays, or slow cookers to keep hot food hot

**Keep Cold Food Cold**  
Store food in the refrigerator at **40 °F** or below  
Place cold food in containers on ice to keep food below **40 °F**

**Serving Food**  
Use clean containers and utensils to serve food

**Two-Hour Rule**  
If perishable food is kept at room temperature, do not leave it out for more than **2 hours**

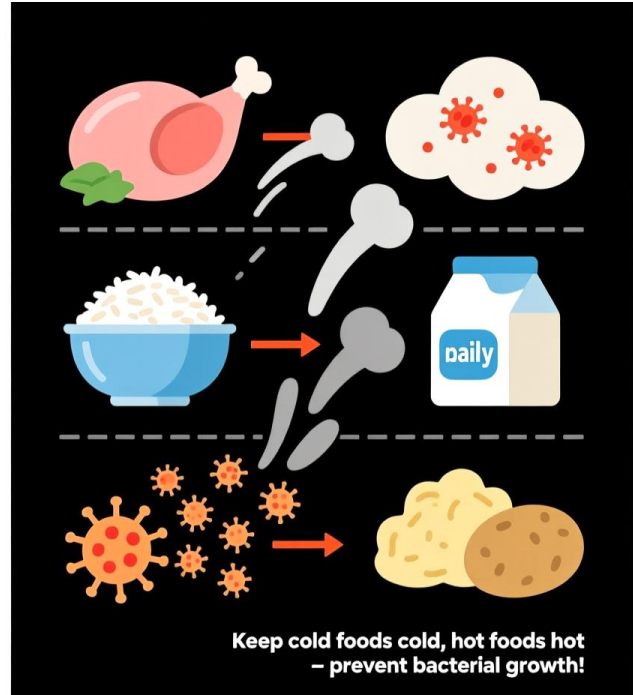
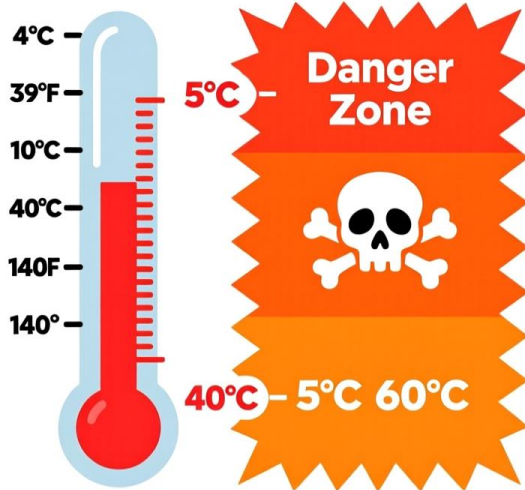
**What is the DANGER ZONE?**  
Temperature range (between 40 °F and 140 °F) where bacteria multiplies quickly.

**DANGER ZONE**  
140 °F  
40 °F

USDA Ad Council ADDITIONAL SOURCE CDC  
For more summer food safety tips, go to **FoodSafety.gov**

[canr.msu.edu](http://canr.msu.edu)

## FOOD TEMPERATURE DANGER ZONE: 5°C - 60°C (41°F - 140°F)



[spice.alibaba.com](http://spice.alibaba.com)

Bacteria grow fastest between **40°F and 140°F**. Don't leave perishable food out longer than **2 hours** (or **1 hour** if it's warm outside).

- Keep hot foods hot (>140°F) – use slow cookers or insulated carriers.
- Keep cold foods cold (<40°F) – use coolers with ice packs.

## 2. Wash Hands Thoroughly – “Loving Jesus is Washing Your Hands!”

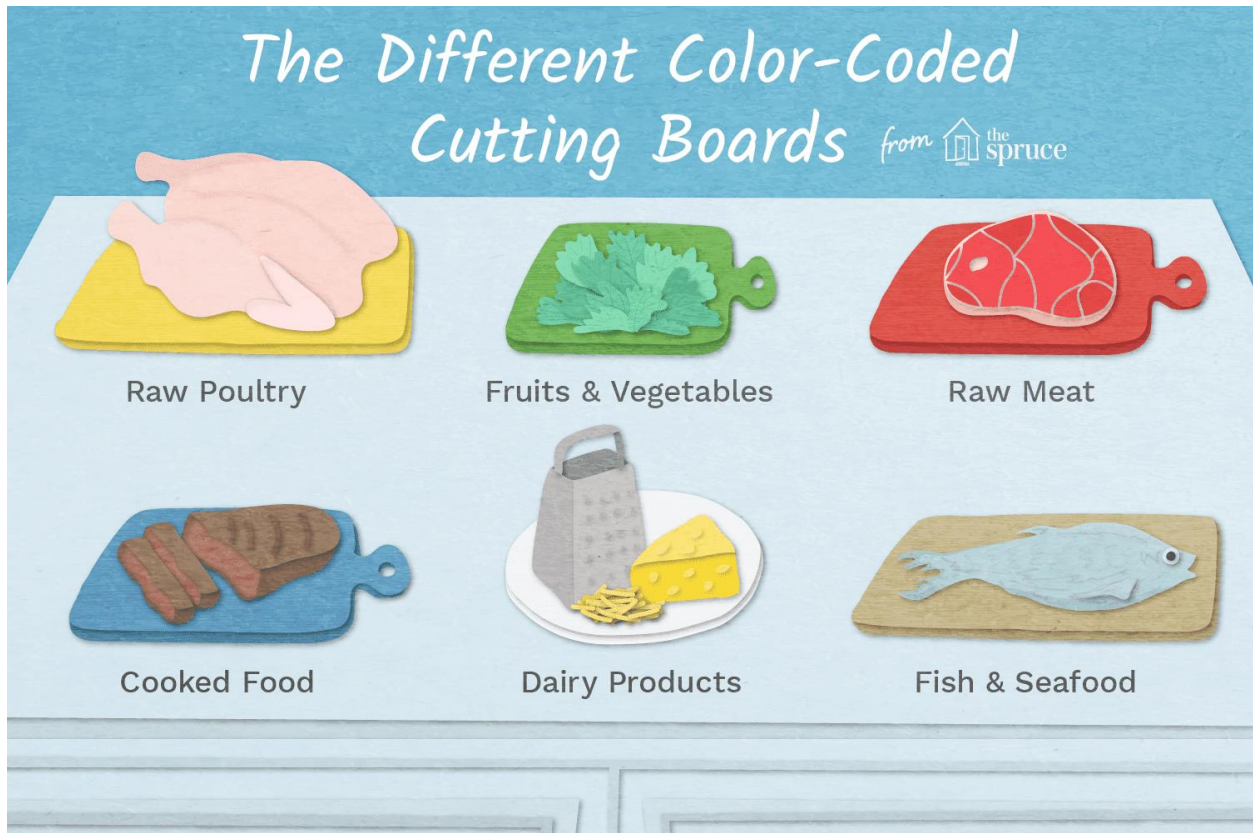


[cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Clean hands stop the spread of germs (norovirus is a common cause of outbreaks).  
Remember our fun reminder after prayer!

- Wash with soap and water for **at least 20 seconds** – before and after handling food, raw meat, or using the bathroom.
- If you're sick (especially with stomach issues), kindly let someone else prepare or serve your dish that day.

### 3. Prevent Cross-Contamination



[thespruceeats.com](http://thespruceeats.com)

Keep raw meats separate from ready-to-eat foods.

- Use **separate cutting boards and utensils** for raw meat/poultry and for fruits/vegetables.
- Wash counters, knives, and hands after touching raw items.

#### 4. Cook and Reheat to Safe Temperatures



[seriouseats.com](http://seriouseats.com)





[anytimestaff.com.au](http://anytimestaff.com.au)

Use a food thermometer – color alone isn't enough!

- Ground beef: **160°F**
- Poultry: **165°F**
- Casseroles and reheated dishes: **165°F**

## 5. Safe Home Canning



[melissaknorris.com](http://melissaknorris.com)



[toriavey.com](http://toriavey.com)

Improper canning of low-acid foods can cause deadly **botulism**.

- Use a **pressure canner** (not a water-bath canner) for low-acid foods (vegetables, meats, soups).
- Always follow current USDA-tested recipes exactly.
- Boil home-canned foods for **10 minutes** before serving.

## 6. Transport and Serve Safely



[thespruce.com](http://thespruce.com)



[arcticzone.com](http://arcticzone.com)



[southernliving.com](http://southernliving.com)

- Use insulated carriers or coolers with ice packs for the trip to church.
- Cover dishes to protect from insects and germs.
- Use serving spoons (not fingers).

**When in doubt, throw it out!** Small acts of care show great love for our church family.

### Helpful Resources

- [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov)
- [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu) (National Center for Home Food Preservation)

*Feel free to print and share this handout at our next gathering!*

May our shared meals always be safe, joyful, and filled with the love of Christ.