

Food Safety at Home

As we all know, getting sick is miserable, and it's hard to watch our children go through a bout of sickness. Food safety is a critical part of preparing and eating food and improperly handled food can cause serious foodborne illnesses. Preschoolers are especially vulnerable to foodborne illness, so we must take steps to prevent them from getting sick and teach them food safety practices early.



One of the most important things we can teach our preschoolers about food safety is proper handwashing. Teach your children to rinse their hands by the steps: wet, lather, scrub, rinse, and dry. Scrubbing and rinsing under

warm water should last at least 20 seconds. If they know the alphabet, they can sing it to themselves while they're scrubbing to reach 20 seconds. Handwashing is the first step in food safety you and your family can take while cooking, so emphasize its importance to the whole family to help keep everyone safe.

There are many ways preschoolers can help at home to prevent foodborne illness. Children may help you clean the counters using a clean paper towel and soap. Also, they can help you wash fresh fruits and vegetables before you use them. When it comes time to refrigerate leftover food, children can help you cover food containers with lids. If you use cloth towels to clean or dry hands, dishes, or surfaces in the kitchen, children can help gather these and place them in a hamper or in washing machine so the towels can be washed regularly. They can also get a clean dishcloth or towel for you afterwards.

Food safety is critical to the health of our families. Start teaching your preschooler young about food safety practices!