

## 10 Tips

### Food Safety Tips for Preschoolers

Keeping your preschooler safe is your number one priority. Building safe habits will be valuable throughout their lives. Preschoolers are less likely to get sick if they wash their hands often. Follow these simple tips to keep food safe and clean for your little one.

1. **Develop a healthy habit for life.** Encourage hand washing after using the bathroom, before and after eating, after playing with pets or whenever they are dirty. Keep a stool by the sink to make hand washing easier
2. **Make hand washing fun!** Sing “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” “the Alphabet Song” or count for 20 seconds each time to make sure your child is washing long enough. Have them pick out a favorite soap to keep them interested.
3. **Send a safe, healthy lunch.** Keep foods cold by adding a frozen juice box or small ice pack to an insulated lunch box. When using paper lunch bags, double bag to help maintain the temperature.
4. **Keep hot lunches hot.** Use an insulated thermos to keep foods like soup warm until lunch time.
5. **Safe snacking.** Many hands touching snacks can result in the spread of germs. Divide snacks up into large bags or buy single serve packets. This will also help preschoolers to eat just enough.
6. **Say no to the dough!** Cookie dough, cake batter, homemade ice-cream, and homemade egg-nog often contain raw eggs. Your child may become sick if raw eggs are contaminated with *Salmonella*.
7. **Holiday Eggs** Hard cooked eggs are a fun tradition for many families but they can be unsafe. After boiling eggs, dye them in food-safe coloring and return them to the refrigerator within 2 hours.
8. **Some foods are hard to swallow.** Prevent choking by avoiding risky foods that are hard to swallow. Cut them no larger than about the size of a nickel - (½ inch). Risky foods include peanuts, popcorn, round slices of hot dog, hard candy, whole grapes and cherry tomatoes.
9. **Watch how they eat.** Have your preschooler sit down when they eat. Avoid letting them run, walk, play or lie down with food in their mouth.
10. **Seafood for preschoolers.** Omega-3 fats in fish and shellfish have important health benefits for young children. But be aware of chemicals such as mercury. Choices that are often lower in mercury include salmon, sardines, tilapia, trout, pollock, and catfish.