Food Safety 101 for Older Adults  
Trainer Script

1. Introduce yourself and FSIS, explain the mission of FSIS and your job/how you contribute to food safety. If not an FSIS employee, introduce yourself and your position.

2. Welcome to Food Safety 101! This program is designed to educate older adults and their caregivers about the basics of food safety and to help you take the necessary steps to prevent food poisoning in your home.

3. Each year Americans get sick resulting in 128,000 hospitalizations and about 3,000 deaths. In fact, foodborne illness costs the US more than $15.6 billion every year. Some of the most common pathogens that can be found in the food products we regulate include *E. coli*, *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, and *Campylobacter*.

   Has anyone here ever gotten food poisoning? *Wait for audience members to raise hands.* Yeah, it’s definitely not fun. Symptoms of food poisoning include upset stomach, abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, fever, and dehydration, and symptoms can range from mild to severe.

   And that brings us to why we are here today...

4. Older adults are at an increased risk of more serious infections from food poisoning. And these infections may lead to hospitalization or even death. But why are older adults more at risk? There are a number of reasons.

   a. Some medications may produce side effects that weaken your immune system
   b. As we age, there are changes in the functioning of our organs, like the liver and kidneys
   c. There could be underlying conditions like diabetes or kidney disease
   d. And age-related changes to your gastrointestinal tract that allow bacteria to stay in your digestive system longer.

   Today we are going to talk about ways you can prevent food poisoning during warmer weather in the summer, including potential power outages. However, at the end of the presentation, you’ll receive this information and more to take home that will help you practice food safety year-round.

5. So we’re going to focus on food safety during the summer because rates of foodborne illness actually increase during the summer. Why? Bacteria love hot and humid weather—it’s where they grow the fastest. And since people are doing more activities outside, that gives bacteria more opportunities to make us sick.
6. We want to make sure you keep food safety in mind, rain or shine. That’s why we’ll discuss food safety before, during, and after a power outage and food safety while grilling or eating outside.

7. With the summer heat comes summer storms. It’s important to know how to keep your food safe before, during, and after power outages that may be caused by hurricanes, tornadoes, and severe storms.

If you’ve ever had a power outage that’s lasted more than a few hours, you know how frustrating it is to have to throw away spoiled food. You can use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce your risk of foodborne illness.

8. If you know a severe storm is coming or your community issues a blackout, you should prepare your refrigerator and freezer for a power outage.

   • Put appliance thermometers in your fridge and freezer to keep track of the temperature. Your freezer should be 0 °F or below and your refrigerator should be 40 °F or below.
   • Freeze containers of water and gel packs to help keep food cold if the power goes out.
   • Transfer items like leftovers, milk, and meat and poultry to the freezer.
   • Group foods together in the freezer to help food stay colder longer.
   • If you think the power will be out for an extended period of time, buy dry or block ice to keep the fridge or freezer cold.
   • Remember to store dry storage or nonperishable foods on higher shelves to avoid flood water.

9. Once the power is out, it’s important to keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed to maintain cold temperatures. A full freezer will hold its temperature for 48 hours (24 hours if half-full), and a fridge will keep food safe for up to 4 hours if the doors stay closed.

10. Now once the power comes back on, check the temperature of the fridge and freezer—this is where those appliance thermometers come in handy! If the fridge and freezer are at safe temperatures, your food should be fine.

   Things like meat and poultry, dairy products, eggs, and cut produce should be thrown out if they are not at a safe temperature.

*Note* Slide has much information on it. Allow longer time for participants to read over.

11. Look for clues to tell you whether or not your food is safe. Are the ice cubes melted? Have frozen food packages changed shapes? Do frozen foods have “snow” or ice crystals? You can actually refreeze food that still contains ice crystals or is at 40 °F or below.

   Remember: Never taste food to determine its safety—when in doubt, throw it out!
12. Now we’ll move onto our next food safety topic—grilling and eating outside!

One of the best things about summer is firing up the grill for a cookout, and we want to make sure your fun in the sun doesn't get cut short by food poisoning. You can follow our four simple food safety steps...

13. Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill

14. The first step is CLEAN.

Because bacteria are everywhere, cleanliness is a major factor in preventing foodborne illness. By keeping everything clean that comes in contact with food, you can be assured you are doing your part to keep you and your family safe.

The first thing you should do before you handle food is wash your hands, and wash them again after you handle food, especially raw meat and poultry.

It is important to remember to wash your hands effectively by using **warm soapy water** for TWENTY seconds. Focus on scrubbing the tip of your fingers, in-between fingers, and in the middle of your palms. You don’t have to use antibacterial soap, regular soap is just fine. Though using only water does not do the job. If you’re at a picnic or cookout, pack moist towelettes.

You should wash your hands before and after handling food, after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, handling pets, tending to a sick person, blowing your nose, handling uncooked eggs or raw meat, poultry, or fish and their juices, handling soiled equipment or utensils, and handling money.

Also keep surfaces and cooking equipment clean, including utensils, plates, and cutting boards. And remember to wash all fruits and vegetables under running water, even if you plan to peel them. NO need to wash raw meats and poultry before cooking. In a 2016 FDA survey it was found that many individuals do wash raw meats, which is not recommended. Washing raw meats can cause cross-contamination and you will destroy any bacteria on the meat when you cook to the proper internal temperature.

15. If you are worried about bacteria growing on your cutting boards, they can be sanitized with a solution of ONE tablespoon unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Flood the surface with bleach solution and allow it to stand for several minutes; then rinse and air dry. But remember, the bleach solution should be made fresh each time.

16. Now let’s move on to the second step: SEPARATE. The purpose of separate is to prevent Cross-contamination. Cross-contamination is the transfer of harmful bacteria to food from other foods, hands, or equipment. This is especially true when handling raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Raw juices often contain harmful bacteria. The key is to keep the juices from raw meat,
poultry and seafood away from already cooked foods and fresh produce. Be sure to use separate utensils, plates, and cutting boards for raw and cooked or ready-to-eat foods.

You can also follow the Separate step at the grocery store by keeping raw meat, poultry, and seafood away from other foods in your shopping cart. Use the plastic bags at the meat counter to prevent meat juices from dripping onto other foods. When checking out ask the cashier to place your meat products in a separate bag. This will prevent juices from getting on other food during the journey home.

17. Now that we know how to avoid cross-contamination, we can move on to the third step: COOK. It is important to cook all meat and poultry to a safe internal temperature so that food poisoning bacteria will be destroyed.

To ensure that your food has reached the USDA recommended temperature, always use a food thermometer. This is the only way to tell if food is thoroughly cooked as color is not a reliable indicator of doneness. We recommend “Grilling like a PRO” with the PRO method.

18. The P means to Place the thermometer into the thickest part of the meat.

R means Read the temperature. Beef, steaks, pork, and roasts should be cooked to 145 °F with a 3 minute rest time. Ground beef like hamburger should be cooked to 160 °F. And all poultry should be cooked to 165 °F.

The last step is O—Off the Grill. Once the meat is at a safe temperature, take it off the grill. Be sure to put cooked food on a clean plate, not one that held raw meat.

19. This is an example of how to properly take the temperature of a hamburger. You can see that it's ready to eat because it has reached a safe temperature of 160 °F.

20. Now let’s cover the last step—Chill. To survive and reproduce, bacteria need time and the right conditions: food, moisture, and a warm temperature. Most pathogens grow rapidly at temperatures above 40 °F. The ideal temperature for bacterial growth is between 40 and 140 °F also known as the DANGER ZONE. Room temperature falls in the Danger Zone.

Perishable food should not be left out at room temperature for longer than Two Hours. And if the temperature outside is about 90 °F, food should not sit out for more than one hour.

If you're traveling with food, keep it cold by storing it in an insulated cooler with ice or frozen gel packs.

21. If you are serving food outside for a picnic or backyard barbecue, remember to keep your cold food cold and hot food hot.
You can keep cold food cold by serving cold side dishes, like potato salad, on bed of ice. You can also serve small amounts at a time and leave the rest in the cooler or fridge.

To keep your hot food hot, set it to the side of the grill rack to keep it warm, but not directly over the coals to prevent overcooking.

22. Now, some foods carry a higher risk of causing foodborne illness than others so it’s best to avoid these as best you can or prepare them so that they are safe to eat.
   - **Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, eggs, & seafood**—cook these to a safe internal temperature as measured with a food thermometer; eggs should be cooked until firm
   - **Raw or unpasteurized milk**—only consume milk labeled “pasteurized”
   - **Hot dogs, deli meat, & lunch meats**—reheat until steaming hot before eating
   - **Unwashed fresh fruits & vegetables**—wash under running water, even if you plan to peel them
   - **Soft cheeses made from unpasteurized milk**—only hard, processed cheeses or soft cheese made from pasteurized milk
   - **Unpasteurized, refrigerated pates or meat spreads**—instead go for canned or shelf-stable pates or meat spreads
   - **Raw sprouts**—enjoy these cooked

23. Sometimes the dates on products at the grocery store can be confusing, so we want to clear things up a bit.

   A "Sell-By" date tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before the date expires.

   A "Best if Used By (or Before)" date is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

   A "Use-By" date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. The date has been determined by the manufacturer of the product.

   Except for "use-by" dates, product dates don't always pertain to home storage and use after purchase. "Use-by" dates usually refer to best quality and are not safety dates. Even if the date expires while in your fridge or pantry, the product should be safe for a short period of time after the date if the product is stored properly.

24. And to help with figuring where and how long to store food, the USDA now offers a free smartphone app called the FoodKeeper. The FoodKeeper offers storage guidelines on more than 400 different food and beverage items. It also offers cooking advice for meat, poultry, seafood and egg products to help users prepare these foods safely.

   Another great thing about this app is that it allows you to enter the date something was
purchased. Let’s say you buy some ground beef today and type it into the FoodKeeper. In 2
days, the app will send you a notification letting you know that you should cook or freeze that
ground beef. If you don’t have a smartphone but do have access to a computer, the application
can be accessed on the FoodSafety.gov website.

25. If you ever have a food safety question, you can call the USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline. They are
available Monday through Friday from 10am to 4pm ET at 1-888-MPHotline. You can also chat
live with a food safety expert at AskKaren.gov. The items we give you at the end of the
presentation will have this number on them.

26. You can also visit our website FoodSafety.gov or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

27. Now time for a pop quiz! Raise your hand to answer the question.
How long does perishable food last in the refrigerator without power?

Click to reveal answer. 4 Hours!

28. How long does perishable food last in the freezer without power?

Click to reveal answer. 1-2 Days! (48 hours if full and 24 hours if half full)

29. At what temperature should you keep your refrigerator?

Click to reveal answer. 40 °F or below!
What about your freezer?

Click to reveal answer. 0 °F or below!

30. At what internal temperature is a ground beef burger safe to eat?

Click to reveal answer. 160 °F!

31. Yes or No? You should wash raw meat and poultry before cooking?

Click to reveal answer. NO!

32. How long can perishable food be left out at room temperature?

Click to reveal answer. Two Hours!
What about when the temperature outside is at 90 °F or above?

Click to reveal answer. One Hour!

33. What is the free app from USDA that offers storage advice for more than 400 foods and
beverages?

Click to reveal answer. The FoodKeeper!
Thank you all for being such a great group! Click to reveal last slide.
Thank you for participating in food safety 101! If you have any questions please feel free to ask.