



Safe Food-Handling Guidelines

Cancer or its treatment can weaken your immune system and leave you at risk for infection. If signs of infection are ignored, you can become very ill. The best way to protect yourself against infection is by decreasing your exposure to bacteria, harmful organisms, and foodborne illnesses. *Neutropenia* is a low *neutrophil* count. A neutrophil is one type of white blood cell. When your white blood counts are low, the risk for infection is great. Generally, when your absolute neutrophil count (ANC) drops below 1500/mm³, doctors advise that you use the following precautions:

- ◆ Strict hand washing
- ◆ Safe food handling
- ◆ Good personal hygiene
- ◆ Limiting visitors, especially anyone with signs of symptoms of illness or infection
- ◆ Avoidance of exposure to live plants and live flowers in water
- ◆ Wearing a mask when out of your home environment or room
- ◆ Good care of teeth and gums

Recommendations

- ◆ Wash hands vigorously with warm soapy water before and after preparing food and before eating.
- ◆ Use separate cutting surfaces for meats and vegetables. Sanitize cutting boards after each use. Wash the board with warm soapy water and rinse well. Wash the board again with a solution of 1 tablespoon bleach in 4 cups warm water. Let the solution stay on the board for at least 2 minutes and then rinse with hot, clean water.
- ◆ Keep hot foods hot (above 140°F) and cold foods cold (below 40°F).
- ◆ Thaw foods in the refrigerator or microwave. Never thaw foods at room temperature. Cook foods immediately after thawing.
- ◆ Refrigerate all leftovers within 2 hours of cooking and eat them within 24 hours.
- ◆ Eat only well-cooked foods. Avoid raw and undercooked foods.
- ◆ Substitute frozen pasteurized eggs or powdered egg whites for raw eggs in recipes such as eggnog, caesar salad dressing, and meringues.
- ◆ Bottled water and commercially bottled soft drinks and juices are safe to drink.

Recipes

Tuna Casserole

- 1 tbsp butter or margarine
- 1/3 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 9-oz can tuna, drained
- 1 10 3/4-oz can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1/2 soup can of water
- 1 small can (approximately 2 oz) chow mein noodles

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Saute celery and onions until tender in butter or margarine. Combine with tuna, soup, water, and half the chow mein noodles. Place in a greased 1-quart casserole. Top with remaining noodles and bake for 30 minutes.

Makes four servings. Each serving contains 300 calories and 20 grams protein.

Fudge Sauce

- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons cocoa
- 1 cup milk
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix together all ingredients except butter and vanilla. Bring to a boil and boil gently for about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add butter and vanilla. (Delicious on ice cream or cake.)

Makes six servings. Each serving contains 200 calories and 8 grams protein.

Food List

	Recommended	Foods That May Cause Distress
High-protein foods	Well-cooked bacon, beef, chicken, fish, ham, hot dogs, lamb, pork, sausage, and veal; canned fish; well-cooked pasteurized eggs or egg custard; cream cheese, cottage cheese, or processed cheeses; pasteurized yogurt; cooked, homemade, canned, dehydrated, or frozen soups	Meat or fish salads with raw vegetables; raw fish and shellfish, such as oysters; sushi (especially when made with raw fish); raw or rare meats, such as steak tartare; raw or soft-cooked eggs (including over-easy, poached, soft-boiled, and sunny-side up eggs) or products made with raw eggs, including Caesar salad, home-made eggnog made with uncooked eggs, and raw cookie dough; cold, uncooked soups
Breads, cereals, rice, and pasta	All breads, bagels, muffins, rolls, and cereals made without dried fruit, nuts, or seeds; crackers; French toast and pancakes; noodles and pasta; potatoes; rice	Macaroni or pasta salad or potato salad made with raw vegetables; breads or cereals made with dried fruits, nuts, or seeds
Fruits and vegetables	Peeled, thick-skinned, unblemished fruit (banana, citrus fruit, melon), peeled apples, canned fruits, cooked dried fruits; well-cooked fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables	All other fresh or dried fruits; raw vegetables
Beverages, desserts, and miscellaneous	Processed fruit juice, pasteurized milk, instant breakfast, homemade milkshakes, nondairy creamer, soda, coffee, tea, commercial liquid nutritional supplements; fruit pies; cakes and cookies without nuts; flavored gelatin, commercial ice cream, sherbet, Popsicles and other commercially made frozen fruit pops; pretzels; chips in a bag; butter and margarine; cooked gravies; mayonnaise, salad dressing, and vegetable oils; plain peanut butter; salt; herbs, pepper, spices, or honey added to foods only during the cooking process; sugar, jam, jelly, preserves, syrup, molasses, mustard, catsup; candy and chocolate; pickles, relish, and olives	Fresh-squeezed fruit juice, unpasteurized fruit juice, unpasteurized beer and wine; noncommercial ice cream, sherbet, or frozen ice pops; popcorn; fresh blue or roquefort cheeses and salad dressings; brie, camembert, and other unpasteurized cheeses; raw or roasted nuts; herbs, pepper, spices, or honey added after cooking
