



## Spotlight on... safefood

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### About safefood

[safefood](#) is responsible for the promotion of food safety on the island of Ireland.

The specific functions on the organisation include:

- Promotion of food safety
- Research into food safety
- Communication of food alerts
- Surveillance of foodborne disease
- Promotion of scientific co-operation and laboratory linkages
- Development of cost-effective facilities for specialised laboratory testing.

### Consumers

safefood places the consumer at the centre of its marketing and communications activities when communicating messages of food safety, food hygiene and nutrition on the island of Ireland.

safefood regularly carry out consumer research to determine issues that are of importance to the consumer. These research findings are communicated with consumers and recommendations are made arising from these findings.

Through public awareness and educational campaigns, safefood aims to educate consumer about the importance of hand washing, the correct storage, preparation and cooking of food, consumer rights in relation to food hygiene and safety, food supply chains, and the importance of healthy eating.

### Research

Food safety policies are underpinned by comprehensive access to current, accurate, high-quality scientific information, and to adequate means for the analysis and interpretation of such data.

In order to address gaps in scientific knowledge related to food safety and to facilitate timely decision-making on emerging issues, safefood aims to undertake appropriate research and knowledge gathering.

The safefood research office is supported by safefoods Scientific Advisory Committee, which brings together experienced experts from food safety constituent groups who can advise on key food safety concerns. The research office aims to commission research to address these concerns.

The research office is responsible for the commissioning, monitoring and dissemination of research



information.

## Nutrition

safefood has a legislative role in 'providing food safety advice and guidance, including advice on nutritional aspects of various foods'. It requires safefood to participate actively in the field of nutrition.

Nutrition related issues in particular obesity are among the key public health threats facing all developed countries. This is a considerable challenge facing society across the island of Ireland and a multi-sectoral, interdisciplinary approach is required. Given safefood's all-island remit, it is uniquely placed to make a valuable contribution in tackling obesity and other nutrition related issues on an all-island basis.

Over the past three years safefood has developed key partnerships and collaborations with nutrition stakeholders on the island of Ireland. safefood will continue to adopt a complementary and collaborative approach in the area.

There are three strands to safefood's nutritional work:

- Cooperation and collaboration on the island of Ireland
- Communicating to influence
- Building the evidence base

## Education

With the rise in foodborne disease and the changes in our food supply chain, it is important that people are educated on the importance of food safety and food hygiene.

safefood recognises that teachers play a vital role in developing the habits of young people. Two popular primary school resources have been developed: The Hands of Doom, and Tastebuds; and two successful projects for post primary: How they measure up: Deciphering Food Labelling, and the widely used project for teenagers, safefood for Life.

safefood continues to work to develop new tools and resources for different age groups and classes across the island of Ireland as well as regularly updating existing resources.

## Communications

The Marketing and Communications Directorate at safefood is responsible for promoting the organisation's key messages of food hygiene, food safety and nutrition through the development of targeted public awareness and educational campaigns. The aim of these campaigns is to raise awareness of important public health issues and to encourage changes in consumer behaviour. safefood's messages are based upon solid scientific data and consumer research to assess the needs of the population on the island of

Ireland. These messages are delivered through traditional and new media outlets, consumer and stakeholder events, sponsorship, advertising, direct marketing, public relations and communication with industry and stakeholders.

## Cool rules on keeping your fridge a safe place to store your food.

Keeping food correctly chilled in the fridge slows down the growth of bacteria. Here are some cool rules to keep foods safe:

- Keep the fridge at 5°C or below.
- Place a mercury-free fridge thermometer on the bottom shelf above the salad drawer, and check the temperature once a week, ideally first thing in the morning.
- The numbers on the fridge thermostat dial do not necessarily show the temperature reading, so check the user handbook and use a thermometer to check the temperature.
- Keep the fridge door closed tightly, as the temperature will rise if the door is left open.
- Don't overpack the fridge, as this can stop cool air from circulating freely and the fridge may not keep the foods properly chilled.
- Don't put hot food in the fridge as this can raise the fridge temperature.

## Storage shelf life

It is very important to prevent germs from raw foods spreading to ready-to-eat foods.

- Store ready-to-eat foods such as cheese, yoghurt, cooked meats and leftovers on the middle and top shelves.
- Put raw meat, fish and poultry in sealed containers on the bottom shelf so they don't touch each other or drip onto other foods.
- Store leftovers in the fridge within two hours of cooking and eat them within three days.
- Don't eat food after its 'use by' date because it might not be safe.

## The meaning of cleaning

Clean the fridge regularly, especially the fridge handle, shelves and storage compartments.

- Wash all surfaces thoroughly with warm, soapy water, then rinse them clean.
- Dry surfaces thoroughly with a lean towel or kitchen roll.
- Wipe up spills straightaway.
- Never use cleaning products that may leave a taste in food or damage the fridge.
- At least once a week, check for foods that have passed the 'use by' date, and throw them out.

## What goes where in the fridge

Top and middle shelves:

- ready-to-eat foods
- dairy products, yoghurts, cream, cream cakes, butter and margarine, cooked meats, leftovers (covered), other packaged food

Bottom shelf:

- raw meat, poultry and fish
- you should always cover raw meats, poultry and fish and keep them in sealed containers

Salad drawer:

- salad, vegetables and fruit
- keep ready-to-eat fruit and vegetables in sealed bags or containers. Always wash raw fruit and vegetables before use.

Based on a document created by safefood, for more information see: [www.safefood.eu](http://www.safefood.eu)