



SAFE RECIPE STYLEGUIDE

Fact Sheet Q&A

WHY DO WE NEED A SAFE RECIPE STYLE GUIDE?

Multiple behavioral studies show that, although consumers are familiar with safe food handling practices, they do not consistently use them when preparing food at home. Several approaches have been taken to improve food safety behaviors, but people simply don't practice them as much as they should, according to a 2016 study published in *The Journal of Food Protection*.¹

The study determined that recipes can be a good source of food safety information for consumers and, when they include food safety prompts, they have the potential to improve behaviors to reduce foodborne illness. In short, this study found that consumers actually followed food safety instructions when they were written directly into their recipes.

WHO IS EXPECTED TO USE THE SAFE RECIPE STYLE GUIDE?

The Safe Recipe Style Guide is designed for use by any recipe writer – professional recipe developers and food journalists, as well as hobbyists – who writes and publicizes recipes for distribution to the public.

Written in conjunction with leading food journalists, the Safe Recipe Style Guide is modeled by the *AP Stylebook*. Since its publication in 1953, the *AP Stylebook* has been a must-have reference for writers, editors, students and professionals. It provides fundamental guidelines for spelling, language, punctuation, usage and journalistic style. It is the definitive resource for journalists.

In 2001, the *AP Stylebook* added a 16-page food section that includes an official AP Recipe Style. This format has been adopted by the Association of Food Journalists and is followed by most media.

WILL USE OF THE SAFE RECIPE STYLE GUIDE REDUCE THE RISK OF FOODBORNE ILLNESSES?

Yes. A major observational study published in 2016 in the *Journal of Food Protection*¹ demonstrated that consumers who received recipes that included food safety instructions demonstrated significantly improved food safety preparation behaviors, as compared with those who did not have food safety instructions in the recipe.

WHAT ARE THE NEW GUIDELINES IN THE SAFE RECIPE STYLE GUIDE?

The four new food safety guidelines are:



TEMPERATURE

Cook until internal temperature reaches XX *(fill in the blank and include chart with specific foods)* on food thermometer.



HAND WASHING

Wash hands with soap and water. *(Include this at beginning of recipe and after each touch of raw meats, poultry, seafood or eggs)*



CROSS CONTAMINATION

Wash *(insert cutting board, counter, utensil, serving plate)* after touching raw meats, poultry, seafood or eggs)

Do not reuse marinades used on raw foods.

Do not rinse raw poultry or meat.



PRODUCE

Gently rub produce under cold running water.

Scrub firm produce with a clean vegetable brush under running water.

HOW DO I INCORPORATE THE SAFE RECIPE STYLE GUIDE INTO MY RECIPES?

First, read through the four guidelines carefully. Which apply specifically to the recipe that you are writing? For example, if you are writing a recipe that features fresh produce as an ingredient, add the guideline that calls for the user to rub produce under cold running water (or to scrub with a clean vegetable brush under running water, if appropriate). If your recipe calls for raw meat, poultry or seafood, include the instructions to limit cross contamination between raw and cooked foods.

In some cases, it may be appropriate for the guideline to appear in the recipe ingredients list; in other cases, it may make more sense in the body of the recipe directions. Use your professional judgment as to how best to convey the food safety information.

All recipes should start with instructions to wash hands with soap and water because current studies show that a large majority of people do not wash their hands properly – or at all – when handling food.

CAN I USE JUST SOME OF THESE GUIDELINES IN MY RECIPES?

Yes. These four guidelines were determined by leading food safety experts to address the most egregious and common food safety problem areas in most home kitchens. The guidelines are meant to be adapted to recipes, as appropriate and needed. For example, not all recipes will utilize raw meats or fresh produce; thus, these particular guidelines will not be needed.

WHAT IF I AM LIMITED IN COPY SPACE FOR THE TEXT OF MY RECIPE? DO I STILL NEED TO INCLUDE THESE INSTRUCTIONS?

Length of copy is a major concern to many recipe writers. As with any form of journalism, the best written recipes are clear in intent but concise in length of text. However, the relevant food safety guidelines should not be omitted for the sake of copy space. Try editing other lines or phrases in the recipe, using abbreviations approved in the *AP Stylebook*, or limiting unnecessary ingredients such as garnishes if space is an issue.

WHAT IS THE PARTNERSHIP FOR FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION, AND WHY DID THIS GROUP ESTABLISH THE SAFE RECIPE STYLE GUIDE? WHAT IS THE FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE FOUNDATION?

The creator of this style guide is the Partnership for Food Safety Education (PFSE). For more than 20 years, PFSE has led the charge on educating consumers about safe food handling practices – Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill – in the United States. It is comprised of 28 partner organizations including consumer groups, food industry associations, commodity groups, and professional associations in health and the sciences, as well as Federal liaisons with the USDA, FDA and CDC. It supports an active network of 13,000 health and food safety educators, called BAC Fighters, who deliver trusted, science-based behavioral health messaging to millions of consumers.

The funder of this style guide, the Food Marketing Institute Foundation, is operated for charitable, educational and scientific purposes. The FMI Foundation supports the Partnership financially in this effort and sees this style guide as a logical extension of its National Family Meals Month initiative.

1. J Food Prot. 2016 Aug;79(8):1436-9. *Recipe Modification Improves Food Safety Practices during Cooking of Poultry*. Maughan C, Godwin S, Chambers D, Chambers E IV.