After reading chapter 19 and reviewing the home food safety websites I’ve come to realize what I need to do to improve my food safety.  Thanks to [www.homefoodsafety.org](http://www.homefoodsafety.org/) and [www.centerforfoodsafety.org](http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/) I am educated with specific food safety tips that will ensure optimal health for my household and I.  Since I live with 2 other people in one of the most populated cities in the country, I feel like after reading all this information that I’ve been too lackadaisical about how I handle food.  Let me start by explaining where I am and how I currently live. My boyfriend and I share a two-bed room, two-bath room apartment with our roommate, Dave. We live in Astoria, Queens, New York City. There is a construction site next door where they’re building a Greek church.  We have a patio with glass sliding doors into our kitchen and the construction is happening next to the patio. So you can imagine, it’s dusty inside our apartment all the time. My boyfriend and I are constantly cleaning the apartment in hopes of keeping it dust free.  Since our kitchen is the first room inside and closest to the construction site it’s even more important that all three of us be conscious of how we handle food.

On the Home Food Safety website it states that "leftover foods should be cooked to 165°F. To be safe, food must be cooked to an internal temperature high enough to destroy harmful bacteria. Buy a meat thermometer and use it!" We don't own a meat thermometer, which has to change now. I don't cook a lot of meat but when I do I usually just cut the meat to see if it's cooked, no more pink. A meat thermometer would ensure the meat is cooked and bacteria free. Usually we reheat leftovers in the microwave or I would eat them cold now I know to cook leftover foods. Another kitchen tip I will implement to everyone of this household is "use two cutting boards: one strictly to cut raw meat, poultry and seafood; the other for ready-to-eat foods, like breads and vegetables. Don't confuse them". I suggest that we buy new ones, since ours look pretty banged up with cutting scars, then label them. Another habit I have is when I'm done using fresh produce I put it back into the plastic bag it came from. Where as the Home Food Safety website suggests, "Place washed produce into clean storage containers, not back into the original ones", which is just another way to avoid harmful bacteria. I'm sure living next to a construction site where there is dirt and dust coming into our kitchen through cracks it's important for me to take these safety tips seriously.

Making sure my kitchen is safe is one thing, but making sure the food I’m buying at my local grocery store is safe is equally important. The Center for Food Safety website has an array of campaigns like: “Genetically Engineered Fish”, “Cloned Animals”, “Food Irradiation” and articles to support many of their campaigns to change the FDA regulations. I will no longer buy food or spices that are “cold pasteurized”. The harmful effects of irradiated food is so bad that I’m actually not interested in ever buying those types of foods again. The one that is most likely irradiated that we buy is ground beef. Knowing what I know now, I will only buy from my local farmer. There’s a market in Union Square every weekend where farmers will bring most of their meats. They’re packed in ice so I know it’s safe. It’s a half an hour trip, so it goes from their freezer to mine. No harmful rays or bacteria for me.

After visiting these two websites I realize there’s plenty I can do to change and improve my food safety.  From changing how I buy foods to keeping my kitchen safe. Following these necessary steps will keep my household and me healthier, longer. I plan on also talking to my local grocery store about irradiated foods in hopes that he will agree they’re not worth keeping them in the store.