Preventing Food-borne Illness in the Kitchen
Follow these four steps: Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill

Food-borne illness facts

• People can get sick from food that is contaminated with disease-causing germs.
• These illnesses usually cause one or more of the following: diarrhea, vomiting, fever, headache, fatigue, stomach pain, nausea.
• Symptoms can begin hours or even days after eating contaminated food, but usually illness begins within one to three days.
• If food is not cooled, cooked, prepared or stored correctly, germs can multiply to high numbers and can cause illness.
• Food can cause illness even if it looks, smells and tastes normal.
• Do not wash raw meat, poultry or eggs. Washing these foods can spread germs because juices may splash onto your sink or counters.

Clean

Wash hands and surfaces often

• Wash your hands with soap and warm running water for at least 20 seconds before preparing food.
• Wash all produce before preparing. Never wash meat and poultry products before cooking.

Separate

Don’t cross-contaminate

• Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs away from read-to-eat foods and always use separate cutting boards.

Did you know?

• Produce with a peel such as cantaloupes, watermelons, and avocados must be washed before slicing them open.
• Fruits and vegetables labeled “prewashed” do not need to be washed again at home.

Clean and sanitize all utensils, cutting boards, sinks and counter-top surfaces completely before and after preparing food, especially raw meats. Follow these three easy steps:

1. Wash all items with hot soapy water
2. Rinse with hot water
3. Sanitize with 1 teaspoon unscented bleach per gallon of water

*Keep a supply of bleach solution in a labeled spray bottle near the sink to sanitize all surfaces.

Did you know?

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Cook

Do not wash raw meat, poultry or eggs. Washing these foods can spread germs because juices may splash onto your sink or counters.

Chill

Store raw meat, poultry and seafood separately in sealed containers or plastic bags on the lowest shelf in the refrigerator.

Sauce that is used to marinate raw meat, poultry or seafood should not be used on cooked foods unless it is boiled first.
**Cook**

*Cook to the right temperature*
- Cooking is the only way to kill germs in food.
- Use a metal stem thermometer to check cooking temperatures. These thermometers can be purchased at most major grocery and hardware stores.
- Keep food hot after cooking (140°F).

**Did you know?**
Germs that cause food poisoning multiply quickest in the “Danger Zone” between 40° and 140°F.

**Chill**

*Refrigerate quickly*
- Always put food away quickly and use a thermometer in your refrigerator. Keep temperatures at 41°F or below.
- Refrigerate foods within two hours.
- Never thaw or marinate foods on the counter.

**Safe internal cooking temperatures:**
- Eggs: 145°F
- Rare roast beef: 130°F
- Steak: 145°F
- Eggs: 145°F
- Fish: 145°F
- Chicken and Turkey: 165°F
- Ground Beef: 155°F
- Pork: 145°F
- Reheating leftovers: 165°F

**Did you know?**
*For quick thawing of meats, you can put it in a plastic bag and place in cold water for about an hour. Or put it in the microwave on the “defrost” setting.*

**Cooling Tips:**
- Don’t overfill the refrigerator or freezer.
- Don’t block the refrigerator or freezer fan.
- Foods cool faster in small, shallow uncovered containers in the refrigerator or freezer. Once food has cooled to 41°F, you can move it to a larger container.

**If you think you have a food-borne illness:**
- See your health care provider if symptoms are severe or last for more than a few days.
- Avoid preparing foods for others.
- Always wash your hands well after going to the bathroom and before eating or preparing food.
- Write down everything you ate or drank in the past three days and call your local health department.

**Questions?**
Contact, Tri-County Health Department at 720-200-9200 or visit us at: www.tchd.org