



MSU-ES Dawg Tracks

April, 2014



**Safety Tips:
Food Safety**



According to food health and safety sources, the U.S. food supply is the safest in the world. However, food safety remains a serious public health concern. American consumers want variety, quality, nutritional value and safe food at a reasonable price. Most people are unaware that we possess the most important tool in the prevention of food-related illnesses or injuries-common sense.

Food poisoning (also known as foodborne disease or foodborne illnesses) is caused by eating contaminated food. It causes an estimated 48 million illnesses (1 out of 6 Americans), 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths each year in the USA. The common bacteria that cause food poisoning are salmonella, listeria, and E-Coli. The symptoms of food poisoning are similar to the flu (nausea, vomiting and diarrhea) that many people may not recognize that they are suffering from a case of food poisoning.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and ConAgra's home food safety program reminds citizens that reducing your risk of food poisoning starts with four (4) simple steps: **WASH-SEPARATE-COOK-REFRIGERATE.**

WASH-

When you wash-

- Dry your hands with disposable paper towels, clean cloth towels or air dry (for 20 seconds).
- Wash your hands thoroughly (front & back and between the fingers).
- Always wash your hands when handling raw meat and changing to raw vegetables.

Counter top surfaces-

- Keep your kitchen surfaces, appliances counter tops, cutting boards and utensils clean with hot, soapy water.
- Wash dishcloths and towels often on the hot cycle of your machine. Smelly dishcloths, towels or sponges are sure signs of unsafe bacterial growth. Bacteria live and grow in moist conditions.
- Disinfect sponges in chlorine bleach solution. Replace worn sponges as needed.

SEPARATE-

It's not "rocket science" to know that eating raw meat will make you sick, but you can still be at risk of food poisoning if you don't properly separate foods to prevent cross- contamination. Cross contamination occurs when:

- ~Juices from raw meats bleed to other meats - if the packages aren't separated - or to other types of food.
- ~ On return trips from the grocery, keep perishables in the back seat of your vehicle instead of the trunk.
- ~At the grocery, be sure to have meats, poultry and seafood placed in plastic bags and separated from vegetables and ready-to-eat foods.
- ~When storing food, refrigerate or freeze groceries within two hours after purchase time.
- ~Keep raw meat on the bottom shelf of the "frig" in plastic bags to keep them from dripping down on vegetables or ready-to-eat foods.

~Keep eggs in original cartons or store them on a shelf as opposed to in the door.

COOK-

Don't rely on sight or smell to determine if your food is safe to eat. There are charts available on the internet that explains the correct temperature for cooking various meats, poultry and seafood.

- To decrease the danger of getting food poisoning, be sure that the interior temperature is at a safe level.
- You should never be without a thermometer for checking meat temperatures to ensure that they are cooked to a safe level.

REFRIGERATE-

Refrigerate foods quickly and at a proper temperature to slow the growth of bacteria and prevent food poisoning.

- Leftover foods from a meal should not stay out of refrigeration any longer than two hours
- In hot weather (90° or above) the time is no more than one hour.
- Be sure that your refrigerator is set below 40°, which will keep perishable foods out of the "danger zone." Bacteria will multiply quicker at temperatures between 40° F. and 140° F.
- Keep a thermometer in the refrigerator at all times.
- Freezing is also a smart storage option to extend the shelf life of perishable foods.
- Use an appliance thermometer to ensure the freezer temperature is at 0° F. or below.

HEALTH TIPS-FOOD SAFETY TIPS-

- ✓ Wash hands often, especially after handling raw meats and poultry.
- ✓ Wash all produce - even bagged salads.
- ✓ Don't cross- contaminate - keep fruits and vegetables away from meat.
- ✓ Cook meat thoroughly at a temperature of 160° F.
- ✓ Stay Healthy- don't eat foods that are past the expiration date.

SCRUB UP-PREVENT FOODBORNE ILLNESSES-

- Scrub before preparation of a meal begins.
- Scrub after touching your hair, eyes, mouth or skin, or eating.
- Scrub after picking up items off the floor.
- Scrub before and after handling raw meats, poultry, or seafood.
- Keep work areas clean.
- Keep work areas as dry as possible to prevent the growth of bacteria.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Keep boxes and packaging in designated areas to decrease the chance of contamination.

**ON QUESTIONABLE FOOD SAFETY-
WHEN IN DOUBT-THROW IT
OUT!!**