

# September: Food Safety Education Month

By: *Lisa Franzen-Castle, RD, PhD, Nutrition Specialist*  
UNL Panhandle Research & Extension Center  
Author E-mail: [lfranz2@unl.edu](mailto:lfranz2@unl.edu)

Foodborne illness, sometimes called food poisoning, is a costly yet preventable public health issue. Each year, about 48 million people get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases. Bacteria, viruses and tiny parasites are everywhere in the environment. They are organisms you can't see, smell, or taste and can contaminate food and cause illness. September is Food Safety Education Month, a great time to check out tips on how to keep food safe by following these four simple steps of clean, separate, cook, and chill.



## Tips for being savvy about food safety:

**Clean: Wash hands and surfaces.** Wash hands with hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food, after using the bathroom, and changing diapers. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before going onto the next. Try using paper towels to clean kitchen surfaces. If using cloth towels, wash them often in the hot cycle of the washing machine. Rinse raw produce under running water. If needed, use a small vegetable brush to remove surface dirt.



**Separate: Don't cross contaminate.** Separate raw meat, poultry, and seafood from other foods in your grocery cart and fridge. Use a different cutting board for raw meat, poultry and seafood. Wash hands, cutting boards, dishes, and utensils with hot, soapy water after handling raw foods. Use separate plates for raw and cooked foods.



**Cook: Cook food to proper temperatures.** Cook roasts and steaks to a minimum of 145 degrees Fahrenheit (F) with a 3-minute rest time. All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees F. Cook ground meat to at least 160 degrees F. Color is not a reliable indicator of doneness; use a food thermometer to check internal temperatures. Cook fish to 145 degrees F or until the flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork. Make sure there are no cold spots in food when cooking in a microwave. Cover food, stir and rotate for even cooking. Bring sauces, soups and gravy to a boil when reheating. Heat other leftovers to 165 degrees F.



**Chill: Refrigerate promptly.** Set your refrigerator temperature no higher than 40 degrees F and freezer at 0 degrees F. Check temperatures occasionally with an appliance thermometer. Don't let raw meat, poultry, eggs, cooked food or cut fresh fruits or vegetables sit at room temperature more than two hours before putting them in the refrigerator or freezer (one hour when temperatures are above 90 degrees F). Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave. Divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.



For more food, nutrition and health information go to [www.food.unl.edu](http://www.food.unl.edu) or scan the QR code with your smart phone or other electronic device to go directly to the website.

## Additional Resources & Links:

- **UNL Food: Food Safety.** Check out information and resources on safe food storage, safe food preparation and handling at home, foodborne illness, and educational materials. <http://food.unl.edu/web/safety/home>
- **Test your Summer Food Safety Savvy.** Avoid spoiling your summer fun with a foodborne illness. Take this quiz and check your summer food safety savvy! <http://food.unl.edu/web/safety/summer-food-safety-powerpoint>
- **Keeping Kids Safe.** Web sessions for child care providers including handouts and information on food allergies, infant feeding and food safety, and safe food for safe kids. <http://food.unl.edu/web/safety/childcare>
- **Food Safety Education for Foodservice.** Foodservice workers in restaurants, schools, healthcare facilities and other food establishments must follow proper food safety principles when receiving, storing, preparing and serving food. <http://food.unl.edu/web/safety/food-service>
- **Food Safety Myths.** Online Slide Show, PowerPoint®, & Handout: Food Safety - What You Don't Know CAN Hurt You! <http://food.unl.edu/web/safety/whatyoudontknow>
- **Walk Nebraska Newsletters.** Each month these newsletters cover a variety of topics related to getting active by walking year round. <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/walknewsletters>

- **UNL Extension Calendar** – National Food Days, Weeks, and Months for September. <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/september>
- **All the Healthy Bites!** *Healthy Bites* is a newsletter that focuses on a different food, nutrition and /or health theme for each month. [http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/healthybites\\_archives](http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/healthybites_archives)

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