



# K-State Extension Connection

## What's Your Food Safety IQ?

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**September is National Food Safety Education Month! How much do you know about protecting yourself and your family from foodborne illness?**

**According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) each year 48 million illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations, and 3,000 deaths in this country can be traced to foodborne pathogens.** Even though the US food supply is among the safest in the world, organisms that you can't see, smell, or taste – bacteria, viruses, and tiny parasites – are everywhere in the environment and some of these can make us sick. **Foodborne illness costs Americans billions of dollars each year, but there are simple precautions you can take to help protect yourself and your family.**



**The Partnership for Food Safety Education shares these tips to help keep you safe:**

- **Suds up for 20 seconds.** Wash hands with soap under warm, running water before and after handling food to fight bacteria.
- **Start with a clean scene.** Wash cutting boards, dishes, countertops and utensils with hot water and soap.
- **Keep foods separate.** Separate raw meat, seafood and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, grocery bags and in your refrigerator.
- **Don't rinse meat or poultry.** It is not a safety step and can spread germs around your kitchen.
- **Keep your refrigerator at 40°F or below.** Refrigerate leftovers in shallow containers within two hours.
- **Rinse fresh fruits and veggies under running tap water,** including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten.
- **Read and follow package cooking instructions.** The instructions may call for a conventional oven, convection oven, toaster oven or microwave, and it's important to use the proper appliance to ensure even cooking.
- **Place meat and poultry in plastic bag provided at the meat counter,** and keep it in the plastic bag in your refrigerator at home.

- **Never defrost at room temperature.** Safely defrost food in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave.
- **Use a food thermometer.** Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that causes illness.
- **Clean out your fridge.** No leftovers past 3-4 days. If foods will not be eaten soon, consider freezing them instead of refrigerating.

**Following these simple precautions takes just a few extra minutes, but can protect your family from serious illness.**

You can learn more about food safety and view the “Story of Your Dinner” video at [www.fightbac.org/food-safety-education/the-story-of-your-dinner/](http://www.fightbac.org/food-safety-education/the-story-of-your-dinner/).

For more information about these programs and others, contact the Wildcat Extension District offices at: Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Wilson County, 620-378-2167; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district](http://www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district).

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