

September 7, 2021

For Immediate Release

Contact: Melissa Propp, RN, Public Health Nurse, 308-345-4223

Stop Common Food Poisoning Risks

SWNPHD recommends taking precautions to prevent the most common types of food poisoning when preparing food at home. In southwest Nebraska, cases of food poisoning are most often linked to poor hand washing prior to handling food or eating food that has been contaminated by an outside source such as contaminated water used to irrigate produce. The bacteria that cause these infections are usually salmonella, shigellosis, campylobacter and E Coli.

Follow four simple steps—Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill.

Clean: Wash your hands and surfaces often.

- Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food and before eating.
- Wash your utensils, cutting boards, and countertops with hot, soapy water.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water.

Separate: Don't cross-contaminate.

- Use separate cutting boards and plates for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- When grocery shopping, keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices away from other foods.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods in the fridge.

Cook: To the right temperature

- Use a food thermometer to ensure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature. Check the chart below for a detailed list of foods and temperatures.

Chill: Refrigerate promptly

- Bacteria can multiply rapidly if left at room temperature or in the “Danger Zone” between 40°F and 140°F. Never leave perishable food out for more than 2 hours (or 1 hour if it’s hotter than 90°F outside).
- Keep your refrigerator at 40°F or below and know when to throw food out.
- Refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours. (If outdoor temperature is above 90°F, refrigerate within 1 hour.)

- Thaw frozen food safely in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave. Never thaw foods on the counter, because bacteria multiply quickly in the parts of the food that reach room temperature.

Safe Cooking Temperatures Chart

145°F	whole cuts of beef, pork, veal, and lamb (then allow the meat to rest for 3 minutes before carving or eating)
160°F	ground meats, such as beef and pork
165°F	all poultry, including ground chicken and turkey
165°F	leftovers and casseroles
145°F	fresh ham (raw)
145°F	fin fish or cook until flesh is opaque

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of microbes on them in most situations. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.

For more information or to schedule a handwashing demonstration, contact Melissa at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th in McCook. Information can also be found on SWNPHD’s Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

####