Harmful Bacteria Can Make People Sick.

Four Easy Steps for Safe Food Handling
Follow These Four Easy Steps to Help Your Family Be Food Safe.

**Clean.** Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get on hands, cutting boards, knives and countertops. Frequent cleaning can keep that from happening.

**WASH** hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Twenty seconds is about the length of time it would take you to sing the Happy Birthday song twice.

**WASH** cutting boards and utensils in the dishwasher or in hot soapy water after each use.

**KEEP** countertops and utensils clean by washing with hot soapy water after preparing food.

**Separate.** Cross-contamination is how bacteria spreads. Keep raw meat, poultry and seafood and their juices away from ready-to-eat food.

**USE** one cutting board for raw meat, poultry and seafood and another for salads and ready-to-eat foods.

**KEEP** raw meat, poultry and seafood and their juices apart from other food items in your grocery cart.

**STORE** raw meat, poultry and seafood in a food storage bag, container or on a plate so juices can’t drip on other foods.
Help Your Family Be Food Safe.

**Cook.** Even for experienced cooks, the improper heating and preparation of food means bacteria can survive.

- **USE** a food thermometer—you can’t tell food is cooked safely by how it looks.

- **STIR**, rotate the dish and cover food when microwaving to prevent cold spots where bacteria can survive.

- **BRING** sauces, soups and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating.

**Chill.** Bacteria spreads fastest at temperatures between 40 °F - 140 °F, so chilling food properly is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of food-borne illness.

- **COOL** the refrigerator to 40 degrees F or below, and use an appliance thermometer to check the temperature.

- **CHILL** leftovers and takeout foods within two hours, and divide food into shallow containers for rapid cooling.

- **THAW** meat, poultry and seafood in the fridge, not at room temperature.

Visit befoodsafegov.gov
Be Food Safe™ was developed by USDA and the Partnership for Food Safety Education. Food safety information is available by calling the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHHotline.

Safe Food for Tennessee
Food safety education is provided in your community by University of Tennessee Extension, Family and Consumer Sciences.

Contact your local Extension office:

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