

News Column for Use Week of 9/14/2020  
Sonia Cooper, Extension Agent: Nutrition, Food Safety, and Health  
River Valley Extension District  
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### **Commit to Food Safety**

September is designated as Food Safety Education Month. In reality, food safety is important every day of every month. What are you doing to keep the food you eat safe? When thinking food safety remember the four core principles of food safety: Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill.

**Clean:** Keep your hands clean. Remember to wash those hands like you have never washed them before. People tend to rush thru the steps of handwashing. You should wash your hands with clean, running water, use soap and lather for at least 20 seconds, and dry your hands with a clean cloth or towel. Hand wipes and 60 percent alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used to clean hands and surfaces if water and soap are not available. Keep countertops and food preparation areas clean and disinfected. Wash cutting boards, countertops, dishes, and utensils with soap and hot water after preparing each food item and before proceeding to the next item. A bleach-based solution can be used to sanitize surfaces and utensils.

**Separate:** Keep raw foods away from cooked and ready to eat foods. Keep foods separate when grocery shopping, when storing food in the refrigerator, and when preparing food. I try to have two different colored cutting boards as a good reminder to keep produce away from raw meat and poultry.

**Cook:** A food thermometer is the only way to know that foods are safely cooked to a high enough internal temperature to kill any harmful bacteria that is present. Have a food thermometer easily accessible. It is easier to remember the cooking step if the food thermometer is within reach.

**Chill:** Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Avoid the temperature danger zone between 40-degrees and 140-degrees Fahrenheit where bacteria can multiply quickly and cause illness. Put leftovers in the refrigerator promptly. This is a good time to decide if you want to freeze some leftovers to serve again at a later date. I encourage you to do your part, not only for yourself but for the health of your family and friends to prevent foodborne illness.

For more food safety information contact Sonia Cooper, Nutrition, Food Safety, and Health Agent in the River Valley Extension District by calling 785-632-5335 or email [srcooper@ksu.edu](mailto:srcooper@ksu.edu).

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