

News Release  
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### **Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill**

September is National Food Safety Month and it's a perfect time to test your children's food safety knowledge before you let them take over your kitchen. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, many children have spent more time at home and probably visited the kitchen many times.

When working with food there are four core practices. There are things you can do to protect yourself and your family. As you prepare and handle food, remember Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill.

- Clean: Wash your hands, utensils, and surfaces often when you cook.
- Separate: Raw meat, seafood, poultry and eggs can spread germs. Separate them from cooked food and fresh produce.
- Cook: Use a food thermometer to make sure foods are cooked to an internal temperature that kills germs.
- Chill: Refrigerate perishable food and leftovers within two hours. Chill within one hour if it's above 90°F.

Washing our hands has been talked about so much I am afraid young people may start to ignore our pleas. Remind them anyway. Clean counters and surfaces with soap and hot water before preparing foods to avoid cross-contamination.

Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat and poultry away from ready-to-eat foods. Use different cutting boards for raw meat or poultry and another for ready-to-eat foods like fruits or vegetables.

When cooking either in the microwave or on the stove, use a food thermometer to make sure your food is done. You can't tell by looking if meat or poultry is fully cooked; color and texture are not reliable indicators of safety. Place the food thermometer in the thickest part of food, without touching bone, fat or gristle. Follow these recommended internal temperatures.

- Beef, pork, veal and lamb (roast, steaks and chops) should be cooked to 145 degrees Fahrenheit with a three minute "rest time" after removal from the heat source.
- For ground meats, like burgers or sausage, cook them to 160 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Cook eggs and egg dishes to 160 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Poultry, such as chicken wings, breast and thighs should reach 165 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

*When in doubt, throw it out!* Discard leftovers from lunch that weren't kept cold. When preparing after school snacks, such as cut fruit or other perishable food, refrigerate them within two hours. Takeout foods should be treated the same way as leftovers at home. Don't leave that pizza or carry out food in the car. Most foodborne illness-causing organisms grow quickly at room temperature; after 2 hours, they may be so numerous they cannot be killed by reheating.