Chili Cook-Off Food Safety

Each year millions of people get sick from food illnesses which can cause flu-like symptoms. Food illnesses can also cause serious health problems, even death. Follow these four steps to help keep your community safe.

Clean.

Always wash your food, hands, countertops & cooking tools. Wash hands in warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds. Do this before and after touching food. Wash your cutting boards, dishes, cutlery and countertops with hot soapy water. Do this after working with each food item. Rinse fruits and veggies. Clean the lids on canned goods before opening.

Separate.

Keep raw foods to themselves to prevent spreading germs. Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs away from other foods. Do this in your shopping cart, bags and fridge. Do not reuse marinades used on raw foods unless you bring them to a boil first. Use a special cutting board or plate for raw foods only.

Cook.

Foods need to get hot and stay hot. Heat kills germs. Cook to safe temperatures: Beef, pork and lamb = 145 degrees. Fish = 145. Ground beef, pork, lamb = 160 degrees. Turkey, chicken, duck = 165 degrees. Use a food thermometer to make sure that the food is done. You can't always tell by looking.

Chill.

Put food in the fridge right away. Generally, there should be a 2-hour rule for chilling food: Put foods in the fridge or freezer within 2 hours after cooking or buying from the store. Thaw food in the fridge, under cold water or in the microwave. Marinate foods in the fridge.