

September 7, 2023
For Immediate Release

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Is Your Next Bite Safe?

Learn more: September is National Food Safety Education Month

Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance (NMPHA) and Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW) are promoting September as National Food Safety Education Month. The specified month provides opportunities to learn more about how to safely handle food and prevent foodborne illnesses—and to understand what practices promote food safety and decrease the risk of foodborne illness and food waste.

Foodborne illness can result in more than just a few unpleasant days of fever and tummy troubles. It can result in long-term effects and can even be deadly. In addition, some people are at a higher risk for developing foodborne illness, including pregnant women, young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems (such as transplant patients and individuals with HIV/AIDS, cancer, or diabetes).

“When cooking for your family and friends, cutting corners can put them at risk for foodborne illness,” says Jeremy Fruk, HDNW Environmental Health Director. “Don’t forget a few basic food-safety principles, such as washing your hands before, during and after handling food, and using a food thermometer to be sure it is cooked to the proper temperature.”

To keep everyone safe from food poisoning, follow these four simple steps: clean, separate, cook, and chill.

1. **Clean:** Wash and sanitize hands, utensils, and surfaces often. Bacteria can spread and survive in many places.
2. **Separate:** Raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs can spread bacteria to ready-to-eat foods. Keep them separate by using different cutting boards and utensils.
3. **Cook:** Use a food thermometer to check whether a meal has reached a safe internal temperature to kill any harmful bacteria.
4. **Chill:** Refrigerate perishable food within two hours. Plan to use or freeze your leftovers within four days. When reheating leftovers, heat to 165°F.

For more food safety information, click [here](#).

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