VAN WERT COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT

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Food Safety Information for Your Home

Safe steps in food handling, cooking, and storage are essential to prevent foodborne illness. Many people think that food is safe until it smells bad or has visible mold, but bacteria that may cause illness are not always visible. Remember to follow the four Fight BAC!™ guidelines to keep food safe:

- Clean—Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Separate—Don't cross contaminate.
- Cook—Cook to proper temperatures.
- Chill—Refrigerate promptly.

How many people go sit down after supper and leave the food on the table? Remember to refrigerate promptly to keep food out of the danger zone, which is the temperature range between 40°F and 135°F. These temperatures allow bacteria to multiply rapidly.

How many of you have cut raw chicken on a cutting board, rinsed it off with hot water and then went on to cut raw vegetables for appetizers? To prevent cross contamination after preparing raw meats make sure to wash cutting boards, surfaces, and utensils with hot soapy water at least. Sanitize cutting boards by using 1 teaspoon of bleach in 1 quart of water. Avoid mixing raw meats such as chicken and beef together and especially do not allow raw meats or their juices to come in contact with any ready-to-eat foods such as vegetables, breads, and cheeses.

How many of you decide you're going to make spaghetti so you get out the hamburger and set it on the countertop until preparation time? Thawing items at room temperature allows for uneven temperatures and the potential growth of bacteria. Do not thaw items on the countertop or in the sink. Thaw in the microwave, as part of the cooking process, under cold running water, or in the refrigerator.

Temperatures for cooking safely:

Food	Internal Temperature
Poultry	165°F
Reheated Food	165°F
Stuffed Meat and Pasta	165°F
Ground Meats	155°F
Eggs	155°F
Beef/Pork Roasts	145°F
Fish and Seafood	145°F
Veal and Lamb	145°F