

NEWS RELEASE

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September is National Food Safety Education Month

Florence, WI-

Most healthy people will recover quickly from a foodborne illness, but some develop chronic, severe or even life-threatening health problems. The most at-risk individuals are those pregnant, young children, older adults and people with weakened immune symptoms. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 1 in 6 people in the United States (48 million) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized and 3,000 die from eating contaminated food a year (4/2024). Symptoms vary from person to person even if they ate the same meal. The concentration of pathogens varies in food and water.

September is not only Food Safety Education Month but also the start of football season! This month take an active role in preventing foodborne illness when you and your family gather for the games. Follow these food safety tips to avoid food poisoning:

1. **Clean.** Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, wash cutting boards and utensils after preparing each food item, wash produce under running water and consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces.
2. **Separate.** Separate raw meats, poultry, eggs and seafood from produce and ready-to-eat food items when preparing, serving and storing.
3. **Cook.** Cook food to the right temperatures to kill harmful germs. Use a food thermometer to check meat, eggs and microwaved dishes. Keep hot foods hot (140°F or warmer) and cold foods cold (41°F or colder).
4. **Keep it safe.** Serve food at the right temperature, including left overs. Store left overs for less than 4 days or freeze if you are not eating it soon. Throw out perishable foods that have been sitting at room temperature for more than two hours. Never thaw foods at room temperature; thaw in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave.

For more information, visit www.fda.gov/food/consumers/food-safety-education-month. Florence County Health Department can be reached at 715-528-4837, located in the Courthouse at 501 Lake Avenue or visit our website at <https://florencewipublichealth.com/>.

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