

**Questions with Brief Answers - ECHO Show #10
“Food Borne Illness Prevention”**
(Taping Date: Tuesday, April 26th – 3:00-7:30 at TPT)

1) *What are food borne illnesses and please describe some of the more common types of food borne diseases. What are these diseases and how do we get them?*

- A food borne illness comes from germs found in raw or cooked foods.
- Germs causing illnesses come from the environment or from mishandling food.
- There are many types of food borne illnesses but some of the more well known illnesses are called Salmonella, Norovirus, Hepatitis A and E-Coli

2) *How will I know if I have a food borne illness?*

- Some food-borne illnesses can make people sick within one hour, while other food-borne germs can take several days to settle in the body.
- Symptoms like diarrhea or vomiting usually start within 48 hours after eating contaminated foods.

3) *What kinds of foods carry food borne illnesses?*

- Any kind of food can be contaminated but dangerous bacteria grow very fast in foods that are high in protein and moisture.
- Some examples of high protein foods that can carry food borne illnesses are meat, fish, poultry, milk, and eggs.
- Some examples of high moisture foods that can carry food borne illnesses are cooked potatoes, beans, rice, and noodles.
- Ready to eat foods found in grocery stores like poultry or shrimp can also carry food borne illnesses if not prepared properly.

4) *How can food become unsafe to eat? (Emphasize problem with unwashed hands)*

- Contamination of food usually comes from germs that you simply can't see on dirty hands or kitchen areas. Just because your hands “look clean” doesn't mean they are!
- Germs found in raw meats, fish, poultry, and pork are “cooked away” when a high enough temperature and long enough period for baking, frying or preparing these foods is used.

- Chemical contamination of food is more likely to happen in restaurants where cleaning supplies are used in a busy food preparation area. Labeling can be confusing, people can be in a hurry and accidental exposure to cleaning supplies or other chemicals can contaminate food during preparation.

5) *What is cross-contamination and how does it cause food borne illness?*

- Cross contamination happens when juices from raw meat, poultry or fish are mixed with other raw meats or fish OR ready-to-eat foods like vegetables.
- Another type of cross-contamination happens when germs on unwashed hands are mixed into foods when cooking or eating ready-to-eat foods.
- To avoid cross-contamination, remember to do the following:
 - Wash hands before preparing food and after handling meat, poultry, fish and pork.
 - Cutting boards, knives and other food utensils should be cleaned before and during use to avoid mixing food juices from meats to vegetables or other foods.
 - In the refrigerator, don't let juices from raw meats, fish, poultry and pork come into contact with other foods or ready-to-eat foods like vegetables

6) *Why is practicing personal hygiene so important when cooking foods at work or home?*

- A common mistake people make is to forget to wash their hands after using the toilet!
- You should wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20-seconds before preparing food and after handling raw meat and before handling vegetables or other foods that are not going to get cooked.
- Eating or drinking while preparing food can contaminate your hands with saliva and contaminate the food that you are handling.
- People who are sick should not handle food because persons sick with a fever, vomiting or diarrhea might contaminate the food.

7) *How long and how hot should we cook foods so they are safe to eat?*

- Heat kills harmful bacteria so it's important that meats, poultry, pork and fish be cooked at a high enough temperature and for a long enough time. Use a thermometer to measure heat and follow the label on packaging to now how long and how hot to cook foods.
- Microwave cooking is fast, but it does not always cook food completely because the heat is uneven.

8) *How should fresh or cooked food be stored so it remains safe until eaten?*

- Germs grow when poultry, fish, pork or meat are left at room temperature for a long time.
- When serving foods, make sure hot foods stay "hot" at the table. Cover them to keep heat in the pans or use a warmer to keep foods warm enough until eaten.
- Refrigerators should be kept below 41F degrees Fahrenheit (5 degrees Celsius) to prevent the rapid growth of germs.

9) *How can food borne illness be prevented in restaurants?*

- Cross-contamination is common in restaurants but it's preventable by keeping cooking areas clean and keeping raw meat, fish, poultry and pork juices from dripping or touching cooked and uncooked foods that are ready to eat.
- Wash hands often because one person's dirty or unwashed hand can spread disease to many customers and employees.
- Proper staff training and regular inspections will help restaurants avoid passing food borne illnesses to the public.
- Workers should not handle food if they are sick.
- Unsafe practices such as improper food preparation or storage, or intentional tampering of food products should be reported to restaurant managers or the local health department immediately.

10) *Cultural issues around food borne illnesses and food preparation/storage practice?*

- Menus featuring raw meats, pork, poultry, fish or seafood require special handling in order to prevent food borne illnesses.
- Asians Topics:
 - Cooked Rice and Cooked noodles common carriers of illness because bacteria grows fast in these foods especially if they sit at room temperature for a long time.
 - NAM (pork not cooked hot enough and for long enough time)
 - FONDUE (foods sitting for long time without proper heat cause illness)
 - LAAB (raw beef salad – shouldn't eat raw meat. Heat kills germs in meats, pork, fish, seafood and fish)
 - CHICKEN and DUCK big disease carriers requiring special attention when cooking them (hot enough and long enough)
 - CESAR SALADS served with raw eggs (eggs should be cooked to kill germs)
 - SUSHI (raw fish and seafood are common carriers of germs)
 - Watch out for ready-to-eat foods in grocery stores (must be cleaned, stored, prepared properly)
- Latino Topics:
 - SERVICHE (raw shrimp can carry germs causing food borne illnesses)
- Somali Topics:
 - "Cold" means refrigerated not sitting out on the table or kitchen area. Keep refrigerators below 41F degrees Fahrenheit (5 degrees Celsius) to prevent the rapid growth of germs.
 - Eggs, cheese and cooked foods should be refrigerated.
 - YOLK drinks (raw eggs should be cooked to remove germs)
 - Raw meats (LAMB, HAM, PORK, BEEF) should be cooked hot enough and long enough to kill germs