

# Fever, Aches and Nausea Oh My!

*By: Lauren Cooper*

It's summer, time to fire up that grill. Before you fire up, bad bacteria may be lurking around every counter, grill or even on your hands if you aren't aware of the dangers of improper food safety or simple hygiene practices.

Make these your everyday habits for cleanliness:

- Clean Hands frequently – hands spread germs
- Clean Countertops and Tabletops – Harmful Bacteria love hard surfaces
- Clean Equipment – utensils, dishcloths, towels, refrigerators, microwaves and sinks daily

Why practice cleanliness, you ask? You can easily cross contaminate germs in your home, if you don't. Cross-contamination occurs when bacteria from one food spreads to another, often from a cutting board, knife, plate, spoon or your hands.

Bacteria is so tiny you can't even see it with a microscope! It thrives in certain temperatures such as "danger zones" between 40 degrees and 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Foods of animal origin such as meat, poultry, and fish are the most common food sources of bacteria.



To ensure that you are providing food safely for your family, please consider:

- Using clean dishes and utensils for serving, each food item should have its own utensil
- Avoid keeping perishable foods at room temperature for more than 2 hours
- If serving buffet style, serve cold foods on ice at 40 degrees or below, use heated servers such as chafing dishes to keep hot foods hot. After 2 hours, discard.
- When replenishing food that is low, don't mix fresh food with food that has been sitting out.

Cross-contamination can lead to foodborne illnesses due to the transferring of bacteria to many different surfaces while not keeping them clean. Bacteria can be the root cause of foodborne illnesses due to improper food handling, however, not in all cases. Viruses, parasites, toxic molds, heavy metals and environmental pollutants and household chemicals, such as cleaning supplies stored near food and food preparation areas can also contaminate food.

Foodborne illness can create a huge economic burden, linked to medical expenses, lost productivity and even death. As we know, the Coronavirus has made a huge impact on our economy, as well as caused several losses within our families, jobs and everyday living.

Symptoms of Foodborne Illnesses are:

- Headache, Backache, or stomach cramps
- Fatigue, Fever, Diarrhea, or Nausea

Keeping food safe extends beyond our kitchens and into businesses, restaurants, processing plants and much more. It's important for us to all work together to prevent an outbreak and or any future outbreaks from occurring.

According to the CDC, long - term prevention of foodborne outbreaks takes efforts from many partners. Good inspections are key to determining the reason outbreaks happen and to prevent any future ones as well. Some examples of prevention measures in food production are quality assurance programs, food safety education for consumers and inspection systems at meat processing plants.

To learn more tips on how to prepare food safely consider attending a local EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) series program. This eight-hour free course helps families learn basic nutrition, food preparation, food budget management and food safety in informal, convenient locations throughout the county.

For information regarding free classes contact:

Lauren Cooper  
EFNEP Nutrition Assistant  
K-State Research and Extension  
Wyandotte County  
1216 N.79th Street  
Kansas City, KS 66112  
(913) 299-9300 ext.121  
[lacooper@ksu.edu](mailto:lacooper@ksu.edu)



Sources:

Duyff, R. L. (2017). *Academy of nutrition and dietetics complete food and nutrition guide*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

<https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/outbreaks/images/food-production-chain-650px.jpg>

<https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/outbreaks/prevention-education/future.html>