National Food Safety Education Month

Mayor Steinmann, The Ewing Township Board of Health and Health Department would like to remind you that September is National Food Safety Education Month. According to the CDC, every year an estimated 1 in 6 Americans (48 million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die from eating contaminated food. Many different disease-causing germs can contaminate foods, so there are many different foodborne infections. Some people are more likely to get a foodborne illness (also called food poisoning) or to get seriously ill. People at higher risk include those age 65 and over, children younger than 5 years, people with weakened immune systems, and pregnant women. There are things you can do to protect yourself and your family. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and foodsafety.gov for more information.

Follow these four steps when preparing and handling food:

1. **Clean:** Wash your hands, utensils, and surfaces often when you cook. **It is important to:**

   --Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food and before eating.

   --Wash your utensils, cutting boards, and countertops with hot, soapy water.

   --Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water.

2. **Separate:** Raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs can spread germs. Separate them from cooked food and fresh produce. **Remember to:**

   --Use separate cutting boards and plates for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.

   --When grocery shopping, keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices away from other foods.

--Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods in the fridge.

3. **Cook:** Use a food thermometer to make sure foods are cooked to an internal temperature that kills germs. The only way to tell if food is safely cooked is to use a food thermometer. You can't tell if food is safely cooked by checking its color and texture. Visit: https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/safe-minimum-cooking-temperature for a chart of safe cooking temperatures.

4. **Chill:** Refrigerate perishable foods and leftovers within two hours. Chill within one hour if it's above 90°F.

   --Keep your refrigerator below 40°F

   --Refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours. (If outdoor temperature is above 90°F, refrigerate within 1 hour.)

   --Thaw frozen food safely in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave. Never thaw foods on the counter, because bacteria multiply quickly in the parts of the food that reach room temperature.

Hurricane Food Safety

The U.S. is in the midst of hurricane season, which lasts from June 1 to November 30. Hurricane Dorian, the strongest Hurricane on record to make landfall, is a reminder of the need to keep foods safe during weather emergencies. Foodborne illness is a risk from food contaminated from flood water and from perishable food not held at a safe temperature due to power outages. If foods of animal origin, especially raw meat and poultry, have not been held at a safe temperature, germs already present can grow to high numbers. Other foods not held at the right temperature can also spoil.

Throw away the following foods that may have had contact with flood or storm water:

1. Food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture. When in doubt, throw it out.
2. Perishable foods (including meat, poultry, fish, eggs and leftovers) in your refrigerator when the power has been off for 4 hours or more.

3. Canned foods or food containers that are bulging, opened, or damaged. Throw away the food if the container spurts liquid or foam when you open it or the food inside is discolored, moldy, or smells bad.
4. Food not in packages or cans.
5. Packaged food: Throw away food containers with screw-caps, snap-lids, crimped caps, twist caps, flip tops, and snap-open tops, as well as home-canned foods because they cannot be disinfected. Throw away food in cardboard containers, including juice, milk, or baby formula boxes.

Thawed food that contains ice crystals can be refrozen or cooked. While the power is out, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
Freezers, if left unopened and full during a power outage, will keep food safe for 48 hours (24 hours if half full).

Safe drinking water

After an emergency, especially after flooding, drinking water may not be available or safe to drink for personal use.

Unopened commercially bottled water is the safest and most reliable emergency water supply. Prepare for a flood and other emergencies by keeping on hand at least 1 gallon of bottled water per day for each person and each pet.

Store at least a 3-day supply of water for each person and each pet. Try to store a 2-week supply if possible.
Do not use water you suspect or have been told is contaminated to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, make ice, or make baby formula. Use bottled water.

If you don’t have safe bottled water, you should boil water to make it safe. Boiling is the surest method to make water safer to drink by killing disease-causing organisms, including viruses, bacteria, and parasites.

If boiling is not possible, you often can make water safer to drink by using a disinfectant, such as unscented household chlorine bleach, iodine, or chlorine dioxide tablets. These can kill most harmful organisms, such as viruses and bacteria.

When using 5–6% unscented liquid household chlorine bleach:

- Add a little less than 1 / 8 teaspoon (8 drops or about 0.5 milliliters) for each gallon of clear water (or 2 drops of bleach for each liter or each quart of clear water).

- If you do not have clear water or are not able to filter the water to make it clear, add a little less than ¼ teaspoon (16 drops, or about 1 milliliter) of bleach for each gallon of cloudy water (or 4 drops of bleach for each liter or each quart of cloudy water). Stir the mixture well.

- Let it stand for at least 30 minutes before using.
- Store the disinfected water in clean, disinfected containers with tight covers.

When using 8.25% unscented liquid household chlorine bleach:

- Add a little less than 1 / 8 teaspoon (6 drops or about 0.5 milliliters) of unscented liquid household chlorine (8.25%) bleach for each gallon of clear water (or 2 drops of bleach for each liter or each quart of clear water).
- If you do not have clear water or are not able to filter the water to make it clear, add 12 drops (about 1 milliliter) of bleach for each gallon of cloudy water (or 3 drops of bleach for each liter or each quart of cloudy water).