Food Safety 101

CLEAN - Wash your hands! Make sure to wash your hands with soap and warm waters for at least 30 seconds prior to handling food and after handling food items. Clean surfaces, such as cutting boards and counters, which come into contact with food items frequently. Rinse off all fresh fruits and vegetables prior to eating to assure they are clean.

SEPARATE - Bacteria from uncooked foods can cause illnesses. Be sure to not have cross-contamination occur, separate raw foods (uncooked meats) from other foods. Have different cutting boards for each type of food, many cutting boards are now marketed to avoid cross-contamination. Be sure to fully clean all cutting boards. Never place a cooked food item on a plate that held uncooked food, unless you have cleaned that plate.

COOK - All foods, especially meats and poultry, must be cooked to correct temperatures to eliminate bacteria. The safest and best way to assure that your foods are cooked safely is to check them with a food thermometer, which measures the internal temperature of foods. Checking the “color” of certain meats is not a safe way to determine completion of the cooking process. Keep foods hot and containers closed until they are served. When reheating foods in a microwave, stir foods frequently and rotate dish to distribute the heat throughout the foods more evenly.

CHILL – The temperature of your refrigerator should be kept at 40 degrees F or below. The temperature of your freezer should be at 0 degrees F or below. Refrigerate or freeze all foods as soon as you get home from the store. Do not thaw foods out on a counter at room temperature. Foods can be defrosted by placing them in the refrigerator, placing them in cold water, or with the defrost setting in the microwave. Always immediately cook foods that are defrosted in cold water or in the microwave. Marinate food items in the refrigerator.

Reference: www.fightbac.org