



Knox County Health Department

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September is National Food Safety Education Month

KCHD's Food Protection Division is working to keep the community safe

Knoxville, Tenn.—While you enjoy the thrill of the TN Valley Fair and game day at Neyland Stadium, the Knox County Health Department's Food Protection division is behind the scenes working with the vendors to ensure proper food safety procedures are in place. In addition to events like these, the team at KCHD regulates the preparation and sale of food in over 2,100 local facilities.

As part of the program's outreach, KCHD provides a free online food safety educational class. Anyone interested can access the course on the [Environmental Health page](#). Individuals, businesses, and non-profits take the course to remain up to date on their knowledge of foodborne disease prevention.

Food safety doesn't just stop with the local restaurant, café, or concession stand. It comes into play every time food is involved. According to the CDC, an estimated 1 in 6 Americans get foodborne illness, every year. Whether you are grilling out for a tailgate or just enjoying cooking at home, always follow these four simple steps to prevent food poisoning: [Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill](#).

Cleaning: Wash your hands between kitchen tasks and sanitize food contact surfaces often. Always wash for 20 seconds with soap and water after handling raw foods and before eating.

Separate: Keep raw meat, seafood and eggs away from the ready-to-eat foods. This includes keeping these items separate in the grocery store, refrigerator and cutting boards.

Cooking: Never thaw foods on the counter because bacteria multiply quickly in the parts of the food that reach room temperature. Use a thin tipped, metal stemmed thermometer in the thickest portions of the meat to ensure that it has reached an internal temperature of at least 165 degrees.

Chilling: Make sure to refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours after cooking. Leftovers are safe in the fridge for 3-4 days or in the freezer for 2-6 months.

About Knox County Health Department

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. For more information, visit www.knoxcounty.org/health.

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