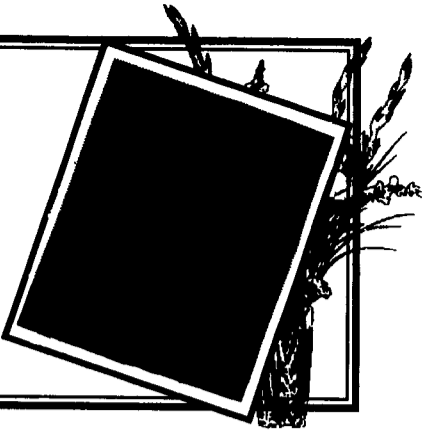


Family Living Focus

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Fight BAC!™ - Four Simple Steps to Food Safety

A few months ago the Partnership for Food Safety Education, a national coalition of industry, government and consumer groups, launched a public education campaign called Fight BAC!™ that focuses on safe food handling. This educational program encourages consumers to think about food safety at each step in the food handling process - from shopping to shoring leftovers. The following are the four basic Fight BAC!™ messages that consumers need to follow to keep food safe from harmful bacteria:

• Clean: Wash hands and surfaces often.

Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cut-

ting boards, utensils, sponges, and counter tops. Wash hands, utensils and surfaces with hot soapy water before and after food preparation, and especially after preparing meat, poultry, eggs or seafood to protect adequately against bacteria. Hand washing is also critical after using the bathroom, changing diapers and handling pets. Using a disinfectant cleaner of a mixture of bleach and water on surfaces and antibacterial soap on hands can provide some added protection.

• Separate: Don't cross-contaminate.

Cross-contamination is the scientific word for how bacteria can be spread from one food product to another. This is especially true when handling raw-

meat, poultry and seafood, so keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods. Separate these food products while shopping and in the refrigerator.

Never place cooked food on a plate which previously held raw meat, poultry, and seafood. The raw juices will contaminate the cooked products with bacteria.

Use plastic or other non-porous cutting boards, because of their cleanability. If possible use a different cutting board for raw products. These boards should be run through the dishwasher—or washed in hot soapy water—after using and especially after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry and seafood.

• Cook: Cook to proper temperatures.

Food safety experts agree that foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses. Use a clean thermometer, which measures the internal temperature of cooked foods, to make sure meat, poultry, casseroles and other foods are cooked all the way through. Use the following cooking tips to ensure doneness:

• Cook roasts and steaks to at

least 145°F. Whole poultry should be cooked to 180°F for doneness.

• Cook ground beef, where bacteria can spread during processing, to at least 160°F. Eating undercooked, pink ground beef has been linked to a higher risk of illness. If a thermometer is not available, do not eat ground beef that is still pink.

• Cook eggs until both the yolk and white are firm. Don't use recipes in which eggs remain raw or only partially cooked.

• Fish should be opaque and flake easily with a fork.

• When cooking in a microwave oven, make sure there are no cold spots in food where bacteria can survive. For best results, cover food, stir and rotate for even cooking. If there is no turntable, rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking.

• Bring sauces, soups, and gravy to a boil when reheating. Heat other leftovers thoroughly to at least 165°F.

• Chill: Refrigerate promptly. Refrigerate foods quickly

because cold temperatures keep harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying. Set your refrigerator no higher than 40°F and the freezer unit at 0°F. Check these temperatures occasionally with an appliance thermometer. Use the following guidelines to properly refrigerate foods:

• Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours or sooner.

• Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, under cold running water or in the microwave. Marinate foods in the refrigerator.

• Divide large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.

• Don't pack the refrigerator. Cool air must circulate to keep food safe.

Remember bacteria cause foodborne illness and are our invisible enemies. Use the four powerful weapons listed above to make your meals and snacks as safe as possible. So in other words - Fight BAC!™

Cargill Awards Scholarships

MINN. — Cargill Inc., has awarded six area students with \$1000 scholarships as part of the Cargill Scholarship Program for Rural America. Joy Leshar of Line Mountain High School; Kristin Myers of Francis Scott Key High School; Michael Harrison of South Carroll High School; Heidi Drury of Clear Spring High School; Jennifer Johnson of Elkland Area High School; and Justin Selleck of Troy Senior High School were all winners.

This year's scholarship program, in its 13th year, attracted 2,432 applicants competing for 250 awards across the United

States. All applicants are high school seniors from U.S. Farm Families.

This \$250,000 program is designed to recognize and encourage academic achievement, accomplishments and talents of young people from farm families throughout the United States. The National FFA Organization manages the selection process; however, applicants do not have to be FFA members to receive a scholarship. Cargill sponsors these scholarships as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Cargill is a diversified agribusiness company based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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