

# WHEN IN DOUBT THROW IT OUT.....

## HANDY HANGING GUIDE FOR FOOD PREPARATION

### Shopping

- ◆ Do not buy food past the “Sell by” or “Use by” or other expiration dates.
- ◆ Never choose meat or poultry in a torn or leaking package.
- ◆ Keep raw meats and poultry separated from other perishables.

### Storage/Thawing

- ◆ Refrigerators should be kept at 40 degrees or cooler. Freezers should be kept at 0 degrees. Raw meat and poultry should be refrigerated as soon as possible after purchasing or receiving.
- ◆ Canned goods should be stored in a cool, dry area and should be free of cracks, dents, and bulging.
- ◆ Cooked or prepared food requiring refrigeration should never be left unrefrigerated for more than two hours. In a warm environment, food should sit out no longer than one hour.
- ◆ Refrigerate or freeze cooked/prepared foods in shallow containers rather than deep containers.
- ◆ Never thaw frozen meat and poultry on the kitchen counter. Thaw them in the refrigerator. Make sure thawing juices do not drip onto other food.
- ◆ If you are in a hurry, thaw in a bag submerged in cold water (change water every 30 minutes). If a microwave is used for thawing, the food should be immediately cooked. Always refrigerate when marinating food.
- ◆ Refrigeration and freezing does not kill bacteria on food which sat out too long and has started to spoil.

### Preparation

- ◆ Always wash your hands with soap

prior to handling and preparing food. You should also rewash your hands **prior** to preparing another type of food or when using a new knife/utensil. Critical to this is washing hands after using a bathroom.

- ◆ Inspect the food to see if there are any signs of contamination or spoilage. Fish, poultry, fruits, and vegetables should be thoroughly washed/rinsed.
- ◆ Raw meats, fish, and poultry should be cut on an acrylic cutting board, not wood. Use a wood cutting board for fruits and vegetables only.
- ◆ Never let raw meat, fish, and poultry or their juices come in contact with other foods.
- ◆ If the work area was cleaned with a dishcloth, always immediately switch to a clean one or use disposable paper towels.
- ◆ After cleaning utensils and work areas, an additional measure is to sanitize. This can be done using 2 to 3 teaspoons of household bleach in one quart of water, then thoroughly rinsing with cold water.

### Cooking/Serving

- ◆ Always cook food thoroughly. Only thorough cooking destroys bacteria. Thermometers are recommended to determine if the internal temperature of the food you are cooking has reached a safe temperature. Minimum internal temperatures should reach 145 degrees (ground meat minimum 160 degrees). If the food includes poultry, the temperature should reach 185 degrees.

- ◆ If serving food for an extended period, hot foods should be kept above 140 degrees and cold foods below 40 degrees.
- ◆ Never serve food on a plate or platter which raw meat, fish, or poultry was cut or prepared on.
- ◆ Perishable food should not be left out more than 2 hours at room temperature (one hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees). Discard any food left out longer.

### Leftovers

- ◆ Place food in shallow containers and immediately refrigerate or freeze.
- ◆ Use cooked leftovers within 4 days.
- ◆ Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees.

