Food Handling 101

- An estimated 75 million foodborne illnesses occur every year in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Most foodborne illnesses are caused by bacteria that rapidly grow at temperatures between 41° F and 135° F. There are exceptions, such as *Listeria monocytogenes*, which can continue to grow at temperatures below 41° F.
- Improper cooling of foods is a major contributor of foodborne illnesses.
- Any food product capable of supporting the rapid growth of pathogens is considered to be a potentially hazardous food.
- Examples of potentially hazardous foods are:
  - Milk
  - Crustacea (such as shrimp, lobster, crab)
  - Raw seed sprouts
  - Shell eggs
  - Synthetic ingredients (such as soy protein supplement)
  - Sliced melons
  - Meats
  - Plant foods that have been cooked (such as beans or rice)
  - Shellfish

Preventing foodborne illnesses

- Wash your hands frequently when preparing foods, especially before beginning work.
- Ensure food employees have no symptoms of foodborne illness, such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea or jaundice.
- Date-mark refrigerated ready-to-eat foods with a seven-day discard-by date.
- Store raw meats separately from each other and separately from ready-to-eat foods.
- Only use food products from an inspected, approved source.
- Never thaw foods at room temperature.
- Use your food product thermometer to:
  - Ensure refrigerated foods are 41° F or below.
  - Ensure potentially hazardous foods foods are cooked to 165° F or more.
  - Ensure foods are rapidly cooled from 135° F to 70° F within two hours and 70° F to 41° F or below within four hours.

For more information on food safety, contact your local public health agency at http://www.dhss.mo.gov/LPHA/