

Join the “Be Food Safe” Campaign

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“Be Food Safe.”
Three simple words
— but a declarative
phrase that’s effective
in the fight against
foodborne illness.

These three words
are the theme for a
new multimedia public
education campaign that’s crucial
to preventing foodborne illness. “Be
Food Safe” uses new consumer-
tested materials and messages to
encourage consumers to change their
behavior and maintain those changes.
The new educational effort continues
to focus on the safe food-handling
behaviors of “Clean, Separate, Cook
and Chill,” which were created for
the Fight BAC!® campaign by the
Partnership for Food Safety Education.

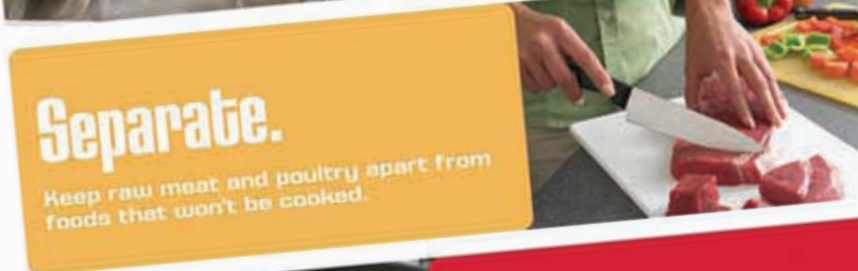
“Be Food Safe” is an educational
program grounded in social
marketing, behavior change, and risk
communication theories. It delivers
specific safe food-handling messages
to help consumers understand the simple steps
they can take to prevent foodborne illness. The
program provides educators with the tools to
inform consumers about foodborne illness and
raises the overall level of awareness of the
dangers associated with unsafe handling and
undercooked food.

USDA developed “Be Food Safe” in
cooperation with the Partnership for Food Safety
Education, the Food and Drug Administration, and
the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Clean.

Wash hands, utensils and cutting boards before and after contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs.



Separate.

Keep raw meat and poultry apart from foods that won't be cooked.



Cook.

Use a food thermometer - you can't tell if food is cooked safely by how it looks.



Chill.

Chill leftovers and takeout foods within two hours and keep the fridge at 40°F or below.

Food handling safety risks at home are more common than most people think. The four easy lessons of Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill can help prevent harmful bacteria from making your family sick. Be food safe from USDA! To find out more about food safety visit befoodssafe.gov or call 1-888-MPHotline

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“Our partners
already use many successful campaigns,”
said Susan Conley, Director of Food Safety
Education at USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection
Service. “We designed ‘Be Food Safe’ to be an
umbrella campaign that will work with existing
educational efforts.”

Why “Be Food Safe”?

Research shows that Americans are aware
of food safety but they need more information
to achieve and maintain safe food-handling
behaviors. Using the easy-to-remember theme,

“Be Food Safe” empowers consumers to achieve and maintain safe food-handling behaviors. The campaign’s focus on the four basic safe food-handling behaviors, “Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill,” provides the framework for communicating the specific safe food-handling information consumers need.

Preventing foodborne illness is one of the USDA’s and its partners’ top priorities. This year about 5,000 people in the United States will die from foodborne illness — approximately 14 people each day. More than 325,000 people are hospitalized each year for foodborne illness and approximately 76 million cases occur annually. That’s why everyone needs to “Be Food Safe.”

The Campaign

As part of the program, a partner’s toolkit was created to provide the essentials needed to spread the “Be Food Safe” message in a variety of different forums. It features a DVD containing ready-to-use print and radio advertisements, feature articles, a poster and other tools educators can customize and use to run an effective, co-branded campaign.

“Radio public service announcements, TV video news releases, magazine print ads and eye-catching consumer materials are part of this energizing endeavor to enlighten consumers on the

steps necessary to prevent illness from the foods they eat,” said Conley. “And there is more to come — a TV

spot, brochure and other materials are scheduled for production in 2007.”


At the dedicated Web address befoodsafe.gov, partners can download the customizable print materials and consumer publications. The blank areas on the items are designed for partner organizations to add their names and logos to leverage the credibility of trusted national and local sources for food safety information.

Proof Positive

“Be Food Safe” is adopted from a proven earlier approach: “Is It Done Yet?” the USDA pilot-tested public health paid advertising campaign. The pilot, conducted in August 2004 in partnership with the Michigan State University’s National Food Safety and Toxicology Center, was designed to increase the use of food thermometers in Michigan. “Is It Done Yet?” targeted suburban parents with children under the age of 10. After the two-week media outreach campaign, 50 percent more targeted parents thought about using a food thermometer when cooking or grilling, and thermometer usage among the target audience increased by about 9 percent.

Based on this successful model campaign, the tools that partners needed were created for them to use in taking these food safety education messages to local media outlets, reaching consumers nationwide. The success of the current program depends upon partners reaching as many consumers as possible.

Help Others “Be Food Safe”

Partners — whether in education, public health, processing or retailing — can help achieve momentum for the “Be Food Safe” message and have a greater positive impact on consumer behavior than the federal government alone. This public-private partnership is essential in promoting the “Be Food Safe” message, generating attention, and gaining momentum for this exciting new education campaign. It is time to spread the word to help all consumers and for America to “Be Food Safe.” 

E-mail befoodsafe@fsis.usda.gov to request your “Be Food Safe” Partner Toolkit.

Toolkit includes:

- Print Ads
- Poster
- Partner’s Campaign Guide
- Campaign Components
- DVD

