Food Safety and Older Adults

- About 1 in 6 Americans will get food poisoning each year.
- The USDA estimates that foodborne illnesses cost $15.6 billion each year.
- Older adults are at elevated risk for hospitalization and death from foodborne illness.

WHY?
- Medication side effects
- Changes in functioning of organs
- Underlying chronic conditions
- Age-related changes to GI tract

- Most common food pathogens that affect older adults include:
  - E. Coli
    - Undercooked ground beef; unpasteurized milk and juice; contaminated raw fruits and vegetables; water
    - Person-to-person contact
  - Campylobacter
    - Unpasteurized milk
    - Raw or undercooked meat, poultry or shellfish
    - Untreated or contaminated water
  - Salmonella
    - Raw or undercooked eggs, poultry or meat
    - Unpasteurized milk or juice
    - Cheese and seafood
    - Fresh fruits and vegetables

- Foods to avoid:
  - Soft Cheeses
  - Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, eggs or seafood
  - Unwashed fresh vegetables
  - Hot dog and deli meats that have not been heated to proper temperature
  - Raw sprouts
  - Unpasteurized milk
FightBac²

The Four Core Practices

- **Clean**
  - Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.
  - Wash cutting board, dishes, utensils and countertops with hot soapy water.
  - Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, even if you plan to peel them.
  - Do NOT wash raw meat and poultry before cooking.

- **Separate**
  - Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs away from other foods.
  - Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for meat, poultry and seafood.
  - Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, seafood or eggs.

- **Cook**
  - Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill harmful bacteria.
  - Always use a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of foods.
  - Color is not a reliable indicator of doneness.
  - Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures- refer to chart.

- **Chill**
  - Chill raw and cooked foods promptly to avoid the Danger Zone (40°F-140°F).
  - Don’t leave food at room temperature for longer than 2 hours.
  - Refrigerate or freeze perishable foods as soon as you get them home from the store.
  - Thaw foods properly- never defrost food at room temperature.
Food Safety Handbook- Guide for Food Safety Workers in Wyoming

Four Key Principles for Safe Food Handling

1. Taking responsibility for personal hygiene, exercising good hand washing, and being a healthy food service employee.
   - 25% of all foodborne illnesses is due to improper employee practices.
   - Anyone working with food must wash their hands.
   - Employees who are ill with colds or employees with cuts or burns are at high risk for transmitting illness.
   - Single-use gloves should be used for only one task.

2. Know what potentially hazardous foods are and keeping potentially hazardous foods at correct and safe temperatures.
   - Hazardous foods are involved in most foodborne illnesses and are generally high protein foods.
   - Most bacteria grow best between 40°F and 140°F (danger zone).
   - Review the minimum cooking temperature requirements for all foods.
   - Have access to and properly calibrate a probe thermometer.
   - Use proper methods to thaw frozen foods.

3. Using correct cook down methods for all potentially hazardous foods.
   - Improper cooling of potentially hazardous foods is responsible for 56% of all foodborne illness cases.
   - High risk foods should be cooled from 135°F to 41°F or less within 6 hours.
   - Use proper methods for cooling.

4. Practicing food sanitizations methods to prevent cross contamination.
   - Cross contamination is the transfer of harmful bacteria from one food to another.
     - Utensils, equipment, human hands
   - Store foods properly in the refrigerator or freezer.
     - Example: storage of raw chicken over lettuce can cause cross contamination.
   - Use proper sanitizing solution to minimize and prevent cross contamination on food contact surfaces.
References

2. Fight Bac!, www.fightbac.org/.