

Food Save Families

By Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

America has one of the safest and most abundant food supplies in the world. But even in this country, too many people get sick from the food they eat.

This year, one in six Americans will get food poisoning – that's 48 million people. 128,000 will end up in the hospital. And 3,000 will die. These aren't just statistics. These are real people, real families, impacted by the food they put on the table.

We can do better. Under the leadership of President Obama, USDA and our federal partners are more committed and united more than ever before to reduce the rates of food-related illnesses.

We are doing that, first of all, by making sure the food industry provides the safest products possible. We are strengthening America's food safety system with policies based in prevention, and building on best practices that decrease potential risks. And we are continually looking for ways to improve.

But our food safety system isn't perfect, and given the nature of the products we regulate, the risk isn't zero. So in addition to doing everything we can to ensure the safety of food before it reaches grocery store shelves, I believe it's also our responsibility to give consumers the information they need to prevent food-related illnesses at home.

That's why this week USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services launched a national public service campaign called *Food Safe Families*.

The *Food Safe Families* campaign is based on four simple steps that consumers can take to

help protect themselves and their families from food poisoning:

- **Clean:** Clean kitchen surfaces, utensils, and hands with soap and water while preparing food.
- **Separate:** Separate raw meats from other foods by using different cutting boards.
- **Cook:** Cook foods to the right temperature by using a food thermometer.
- **Chill:** Chill raw and prepared foods promptly.

These are small steps that can make a big difference in preventing food-related illnesses.

We know that it's our job to make sure food is as safe as possible before it reaches consumers, and we take that job seriously. But we want all Americans - cooking in the kitchen, or outdoors on the grill - to take the messages of clean, separate, cook and chill to heart. And year-round, we want consumers to have the information they need to be food safe at home.

To learn more about the new campaign and for answers to questions about keeping your food safe, visit www.foodsafety.gov.