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Our mission is to protect the health, safety and well-being of all Union County by providing quality public health services.

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Press Release

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For Use in Home Improvement Tab

Spring Cleaning for Your Kitchen

As you start your spring cleaning, ask yourself whether your kitchen needs extra attention. Would it hold up to a health and safety inspection like the ones restaurants undergo?

“When we do restaurant inspections, we focus on hot and cold food storage temperatures, final cooking temperatures, eliminating cross contamination, good personal hygiene and the cleanliness of surfaces,” said Marcia Dreiseidel, Environmental Health Director at the Union County Health Department. “These are also important considerations in your home kitchen.”

A food safety quiz developed by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health can help you take a careful look at your own kitchen. The quiz, available at www.uchd.net/in-the-news, was completed by more than 10,000 home cooks between 2006 and 2008, and the results were surprising. Nearly 40 percent got a grade of C or lower.

Here's a taste of the questions:

- When cooking food to serve later, do you rapidly cool and place it in the refrigerator?
- Do you have a working refrigerator thermometer?
- Do you store raw meat below other food in the refrigerator (so it can't drip on other food)?
- Before preparing food, do you remove all jewelry from your hands? Do you keep your fingernails trimmed?
- Are your kitchen shelves and cabinets clean and free of dust?

-more-



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If you said no to any of these questions, you're not alone. Anywhere from one-fourth to one-half of home cooks fail to follow these basic food safety practices. Other important but commonly missed safety precautions include:

- Sanitizing cutting boards in the dishwasher, with hot soapy water or with a solution of bleach and water
- Thoroughly washing fruit and vegetables
- Having soap and paper towels readily available for hand washing
- Washing and sanitizing sponges and kitchen rags daily
- Making sure the kitchen floor, ceiling and walls are clean

Many people do not want to eat in a restaurant that cannot pass inspection, so why would there be any exception for the kitchen in your own home? This spring, think about starting the cleaning ritual with your kitchen.

For more information on food safety, please call the Union County Health Department at (937) 642-2053 or visit www.uchd.net.

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Editor Note:
Article taken from the Mayo Clinic. Written by Jennifer Nelson, M.S., R.D. and Katherine Zeratsky, R.D.; Quotes inserted from the Union County Health Dept.