

# Health Unit Media Release

January 31, 2011



## Food safety outreach campaign begins in February

The Leeds Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is launching a safe food handling campaign in the month of February with the aim of improving food handling skills in the home. The campaign will focus on the four simple steps to food safety that anyone preparing food must follow to ensure the food they eat, or serve to their families and guests, will be safe.

There are many safeguards in place to protect the food we eat, but simple errors in food handling can leave us at risk of becoming ill. There are members of our communities that are at a greater risk of becoming seriously ill or dying from food borne illness. The elderly, those with pre-existing health conditions, pregnant women and the very young are at a greater risk of becoming seriously ill from a food borne illness and developing complications as a result.

Food borne illness is most often caused by bacteria or the toxins they produce. However, viruses, parasites or chemicals in our food may also make us sick. When food is handled improperly, bacteria can grow to harmful levels and cause illness. It is important to know that most bacteria that cause food borne illness do not taste or smell bad, so they don't alert us they are multiplying in our food.

Director of Health Protection, Jane Lyster states, "food borne illness is completely preventable and the aim of this food safety campaign is to empower people in our communities with the knowledge so they can protect their families"

The campaign will focus on four basic principles of safe food handling: separate, clean, cook and chill. For more information on food safety, visit [www.healthunit.org/foodsafety](http://www.healthunit.org/foodsafety) or call the Health ACTION Line at 1-800-660-5853.

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