

“Healthy Home Tips”

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With 2013 beginning, I have decided to hopefully become a little more organized in my life. I love to cook and bake with my family, so I thought that the kitchen might be the best place to start. I began researching the proper food handling techniques and came across some that I found interesting to share with you.

The most important thing in my life is my family and I think a lot of these tips will help to ensure that I help them stay healthy. Most of us know basically how to clean our own kitchen. But I started wondering why we don't hold our own kitchen to higher standards, such as professional restaurant kitchens.

Here are a few tips: First, start by making sure that you wash your hands for a full 20 seconds with anti-bacterial soap and dry them with a paper towel, not a dish towel that might be contaminated. Second, always defrost your meat in the refrigerator or microwave. Never leave protein on the counter all day to defrost because it could likely start to grow bacteria before it fully defrosts. The third tip I discovered is to check your refrigerator temperature with a thermometer to make sure that it is working properly. Refrigerators should be set at 40 degrees or below to prevent bacteria from growing. And, don't overload your refrigerator; this prevents proper air circulation and cooling, which could cause your food to spoil. The fourth tip is to always wash your cutting boards and utensils with boiling water or in the dishwasher, as this kills any bacteria that might be present. The fourth tip is important when working with raw meats, but also with raw vegetables, as they have been linked with recent Salmonella outbreaks.

I'm almost pretty sure that I'm not the only one who ends up with leftovers. Store them correctly by using food-grade plastic containers to store food; this prevents chemicals from the plastic absorbing into the food. Label the food stored with the date it was stored and try not to cross contaminate food. And, finally, when you begin to cook begin boiling a pot of water. Use the boiling water to kill germs from sponges and utensils that you are using. Once you're done cooking, pour the boiling water into the sink to sanitize it.

I hope these tips are helpful to you and your family. We at The Wellness Center at Bayside wish you a Happy and Healthy 2013. Please remember we are here to help “Add Life To Your Years, and Years to your Life”. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at 409-267-3700. We look forward to hearing from you.