

Wild Side

One of my early life experiences was as an International Four-H Youth Exchange (IFYE) delegate to Botswana in southern Africa. My first host family was a mom with 3 boys and numerous chickens. On my second day, I noticed there was one less chicken chasing me in the yard. Later, there were chicken pieces on the counter — kept at a warm room temperature all day.

I asked my host mom about the chicken. She frowned. “The bird had been sick,” and smiled as she added “but now we will eat it!”

My host mom didn't request my help with the butchering, so I can't comment on her food safety skills of starting with clean hands or work area.

I would have needed to wash my hands multiple times (which would have been hard since the house didn't have running water). In our developed country, we have the privilege to have clean, running water. I think nothing of using a sink and having soap to get things clean. When I share food safety education, I always start with concept of “clean.”

My next point of concern was the chicken on the counter. At room temperature. For 8+ hours.

My host family had a propane powered refrigerator, but it wasn't used for the chicken. (And honestly, I don't remember what they kept in the fridge!)

Sure, I put my chicken on the counter as I'm heating the grill or oven. But basic science observations reveal that bacteria grows best in temperatures between 40-135° F - often called the danger zone. It is why our refrigerators are set at 40° F or below and we cook food to minimum temperatures for food safety. Temperature control for safety is a big deal since bacteria multiply. In two hours, bacteria levels can be at a dangerous level that can cause food borne illness.

Safe food handling starts from the time the animal is processed. Additional food safety steps are needed for transporting and storage prior to preparation. If you or someone in your household will be hunting, be prepared for proper and safe food handling, especially as it relates to cleanliness and chilling. K-State Research and Extension food safety experts have a variety of resources to help you keep animal products safe. Visit www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/topics/animal for more information.

After my host mom told me the chicken was sick, I stopped asking questions. I didn't eat the chicken (and avoided all meat with this family). Sign me up for sorghum porridge and a lifetime as a food safety educator!

Source: <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/topics/animal.html#game>

Upcoming K-State Research and Extension Events

Dining with Diabetes: In person class, Tuesdays, November 2, 9, 16, & 30; 4:45-6:45 p.m. Arkansas City, \$25, scholarships available; call 221-5450 or 441-4565 to sign-up or online at <https://forms.gle/MWFBjVqSTMYtypBa9>. Limited space available.

Dining with Diabetes Email Challenge - FREE, 4 weeks of bi-weekly emails to encourage and educate. Starts November 1. Register by October 27. <https://forms.gle/MWFBjVqSTMYtypBa9>.

Extension Council Election, November 20, stop by anytime 4:30-6:30 p.m. Baden Square, 700 Gary Street, Winfield (residents of Cowley County 18 and older are eligible to vote)

Fall for Extension - Dinner, Live & Silent Auction, Raffle Drawing - November 20, 6 p.m. Baden Square, 700 Gary Street, Winfield, call to reserve seat(\$30) or table for 8 (\$220), 620-221-5450.

