For Immediate Release

September is National Food Safety Education Month

MORGANTOWN, WV (August 30, 2018) — According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), every year, 1 in 6 Americans get sick from eating contaminated foods. Also, 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths in this country can be traced to foodborne pathogens.

Monongalia County Health Department’s Environmental Health program wants to remind people that September is National Food Safety Education Month. This observance exists to spread awareness about dangers and causes of foodborne illnesses. Foodborne illnesses are caused by bacteria on contaminated foods. Foods are more likely to be contaminated when they are out of their temperature safe zones and when cross-contamination occurs.

Certain groups of people are more likely to contract a foodborne illness. They include:
- Children younger than 5.
- Adults aged 65 or older.
- People with weakened immune systems from illness or medical treatment.
- Pregnant women.

To prevent food poisoning, the CDC recommends you:
- Clean your hands and cooking surfaces often.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs separated.
- Cook foods to their appropriate temperature to kill harmful bacteria.
  - For more information on the appropriate temperatures to cook food to, refer to this chart: foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html.
- Keep your refrigerator below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and refrigerate leftovers within two hours.
Thaw frozen food safely in your refrigerator, in cold water or in your microwave. Don’t thaw foods on counters, because bacteria grow quickly in parts of food that reach room temperature.

The most common symptoms of food poisoning are upset stomach, stomach cramps, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and fever, according to the CDC. Symptoms of food poisoning in which seeing a doctor is recommended include:

- High fever (over 101.5°F).
- Blood in stools.
- Frequent vomiting that prevents you from keeping liquid down.
- Diarrhea that lasts more than three days.
- Signs of dehydration, including decrease in urination, dry mouth and throat and feeling dizzy when standing up.

For more information about National Food Safety Education Month, visit cdc.gov/foodsafety/education-month.html.

For more information on MCHD, check out monchd.org and follow us on Facebook and Twitter @WVMCHD for up-to-date information on health and safety.

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