



June 2009

Dear Risk Reducer:

Remember the basics when grilling this summer. Keep friends and family safe by cooking food to a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria. You cannot determine if food is fully cooked just by looking at it. The only way to make sure food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature is to use a food thermometer.

The best type of food thermometer for grilling is digital instant-read (Thermistor). It reads the temperature in 10 seconds when placed 1/2" deep into food. This type of thermometer can measure both thin and thick foods.

A thermometer-fork combination can also be used and measures the temperature in 2–10 seconds. It must be placed at least 1/4" deep in the thickest part of the meat. The sensor in the tine of the fork must be fully inserted.

Both these thermometers are not designed to remain in the food while it is cooking. Remember, the food thermometer should be placed in the thickest part of the food and should not touch bone, fat, or gristle. Check the temperature in several places to make sure the food is evenly heated. Clean the food thermometer with hot water and soap before and after each use.

Tip: Although hot dogs are fully cooked, always reheat to 165°F before eating.

Healthily Yours,

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serving Webster, Wright, Humboldt, Marshall,
Hardin, Greene, Hamilton and Tama Counties.

Salty Facts

Salt added to restaurant meals and processed foods accounts for 77% of the sodium you consume. Foods with naturally occurring sodium add about 12%. The amount added while eating is 6% and the amount added during home cooking only contributes 5%.

If you did away with the second hand salt added to your food, you would probably consume less than 1000 mg. of sodium a day. The Center for Disease Control wants Americans over 40 years of age to limit their sodium intake to no more than 1,500 mg. per day. Currently most people eat about 4,000 mg. of sodium per day.

The key is reading food labels in the grocery store and choosing mostly fresh foods and foods with 5% or less of the daily value for sodium. Focus on these restaurant best bets to help you achieve a goal of 1,500 mg. of sodium or less: salad with vinegar, plain burger, baked fish with steamed vegetables, baked potato with sour cream, plain rice and steamed vegetables, and pasta tossed with garlic and fresh tomatoes.

Strawberry Smoothies



2 to 3 cups frozen strawberries
1 (carton (6-8 oz.) vanilla,
plain or fruit-flavored yogurt
1/4 cup milk
3 ice cubes

Wash hands. Put all ingredients in a blender and blend on high until smooth. Pour into glasses. Makes 3 servings, 1 cup each.

One cup strawberries has 50 calories with more Vitamin C than an orange. Strawberries are also a good source of fiber.

Locally Grown Foods

Buying and consuming locally grown foods offers several advantages. You can:

- obtain fresh, full-flavored, high quality products
- choose unique produce varieties
- demonstrate support for local farmers
- keep food dollars in Iowa
- reduce the distance food travels
- know where your food comes from

Meat Directly from Producers

It is common for individuals to buy meats locally and in quantity – typically by quarter, half or whole animals. There is economy in buying in bulk. Consider the following: cost of the animal, cost of the processing, storage and delivery costs, and whether you need to invest in a freezer.

Questions like: How much meat do I get from half a beef or half a hog? What kind of cuts do I get? and What about aging the meat? are answered in the new publication *Beef and Pork – Whole Animal Buying Guide – PM 2076a*. It is available at the local county extension office for \$1.00 or download a copy by visiting the extension web site: www.extension.iastate.edu

Nutrient Packed Spinach

Spinach is packed with vitamins and minerals and is low in calories. This green vegetable provides protection against cancer and atherosclerosis because it contains 13 different flavonoids and is an excellent source of both vitamin C and beta carotene. Spinach also contains folate which can decrease risk of heart attack and stroke.



A one cup serving of fresh spinach leaves provides 190.5% of the daily value of vitamin K which plays an important part in blood clotting and bone health. When you “think green,” think spinach.

Food Preservation Questions

Can salsa be canned?

Canning salsa or other mixed tomato products (with added vegetables like onions, green peppers, celery) requires recipes that are designed and tested to meet the proper pH or acidity level. Use up-to-date, tested recipes which meet USDA guidelines. Do not change the proportion of ingredients in recipes. If you have a favorite homemade recipe or want to vary the ingredients, it is best to freeze the product to insure safety.

Can tomatoes be frozen?

Tomatoes can be easily frozen. Wash and peel, then leave whole or cut them up. Tomatoes can be frozen in the raw form or cooked until tender, cooled, and frozen.

Guacamole with a Twist

4 ripe avocados, peeled and seeded
3 tablespoons fresh lemon or lime juice
½ cup salsa
1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
4 cloves garlic minced (optional)
Salt to taste

Combine avocados, juice, and garlic in a bowl. Mash with the back of a fork or use a potato masher. Add salsa and cilantro and mix well to blend flavors. Cover and refrigerate. Serve cold.

Meat Counter Information

The liquid in packaged meat is not blood. Any blood is removed from the meat during harvesting and only a small amount remains in the muscle tissue. The meat’s natural moisture, combined with muscle pigment, is the source of the liquid.

Freezer burn appears as grayish-brown leathery spots on meat and is caused by air reaching the surface. Freezer burn does not make food unsafe, merely dry in spots. Cut away freezer-burned portions before cooking the food.