

# Words on Wellness

Your extension connection to nutrition and fitness

## Recycling Food Waste? Waste Not, Want Not?

Supermarkets throw out \$47 billion worth of food each year. Much of this food is still safe to eat. The idea is to offer food to people at low prices and reduce the amount of food wasted. This has led to new businesses opening around the United States that provide groceries at a discounted price. These food items are safe to eat, but one of the following applies:

- They are past their sell-by date (end of store "shelf life" but still safe to eat).
- They are close to their use-by date (found on shelf-stable products; indicates absolute best quality when unopened).
- They have minor imperfections (e.g., slightly bruised produce, slightly dented cans).
- They are from overstocks.

**Why is repurposing of these foods gaining popularity?** Foods that are past their sell-by date or close to their use-by date can still be safe to eat and therefore can be used to combat hunger. Currently, 1 in 8 or 11.9% of Iowans are food insecure, meaning that at some time during the year they lacked access to safe and nutritious food. This leads to lower intakes of nutrient-rich foods, more health problems, and loss of independence. People who are food insecure do not receive the nutrients needed to remain healthy and active. Not having access to safe and nutritious foods in midlife and older adulthood can make completing daily tasks (e.g., cleaning, bathing, etc.) more challenging. In addition, getting a foodborne illness can have long term health consequences. In children, a lack of proper nutrition is associated with increased behavior problems, school absenteeism, difficulty concentrating, and fatigue.

The Iowa organization Table to Table is working to reduce food waste and food



insecurity. Table to Table collects edible food from donors and distributes these food items to those in need through agencies that serve the hungry, homeless, and at-risk populations. Since 1996, Table to Table has rescued about 12 million pounds of food from grocery stores, restaurants, schools, and other food operations. To learn more about Table to Table, visit [www.table2table.org/](http://www.table2table.org/).



## Tzatziki with Pita Chips

**Tzatziki** (make a day before serving):

### Ingredients

- 1 unpeeled cucumber, washed and sliced lengthwise
- 1 teaspoon garlic, peeled and minced (about 1–2 cloves)
- 2 containers (6 ounces each) plain Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon dried dill and/or fresh mint
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil

### Instructions

1. Use a spoon to scrape out cucumber seeds. Dice the cucumber into small pieces or shred using a grater.
2. Spread cucumber on top of a paper towel. Roll up the towel and squeeze to remove excess liquid. Transfer cucumber to a large bowl.
3. Add the remaining ingredients and mix. Cover and refrigerate until served.

### Pita Chips:

#### Ingredients

- 6 whole wheat pita pockets (6" each)
- Cooking spray
- 1/2 teaspoon spice (e.g., dried rosemary, basil, cumin, cayenne pepper)

#### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Spray the pita with oil, cut in 8 wedges, and sprinkle with seasoning.
3. Toast chips 4–5 minutes, then turn and toast 1–2 minutes more. (Watch carefully at the end because they can quickly turn brown.)

Recipe from SpendSmart EatSmart.  
Find more recipes at [www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings).

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## What's in Your Kitchen?

A 2013 study identified the six germiest items in the kitchen. These items were found to have pathogens (disease-causing agents) on them that can cause someone, especially children, pregnant women, and older adults, to become ill. Risk of illness can be lowered by using the cleaning tips below.

Kitchen Item	Pathogen Found	How to Decrease Pathogens
Can opener	salmonella, E. coli, yeast, and mold	Handheld: Wash in hot soapy water, rinse, and air dry after each use.  Electric: Using a clean cloth, wash the cutter, feed gear, and magnet with hot soapy water. Rinse with a wet, clean cloth.
Vegetable drawer of refrigerator	salmonella, listeria, yeast, and mold	Wash in hot soapy water, rinse and air dry after each use.
Blender	salmonella, E. coli, yeast, and mold	Dishwasher Safe: Wash blender in the dishwasher.  Not Dishwasher Safe: Wash in hot soapy water, rinse, and dry before reassembling.
Rubber spatula	E. coli, yeast, and mold	Wash in hot soapy water, paying special attention to the area where the handle joins the spatula.
Refrigerator meat compartment	salmonella, E. coli, yeast, and mold	Use a clean cloth and wash the bin with a mild detergent mixed with warm water. Thoroughly rinse with warm, clean water and dry.
Food storage container with rubber seal	salmonella, yeast, and mold	Wash in hot soapy water, paying special attention to any grooves where the cover attaches to the container. Then rinse and dry.
<b>General Safe Food Practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 10–15 seconds.</li> <li>• Avoid cross-contamination by storing ready-to-eat foods on top of uncooked foods, such as meat, to avoid raw juices dripping on other foods.</li> </ul>		

[http://www.nsf.org/newsroom\\_pdf/2013\\_germ\\_study\\_FOR-WEB-ONLY.pdf](http://www.nsf.org/newsroom_pdf/2013_germ_study_FOR-WEB-ONLY.pdf)

## The Safety of CrossFit

High-intensity workouts such as CrossFit are popular workouts, but are they for everyone? CrossFit combines gymnastics, endurance exercises, speed training, and strength training into one intense and short workout called workout of the day. These exercises are done with very short breaks in between. There is limited research about the safety of CrossFit in comparison to other types of exercise.

According to John Porcari, PhD, head of the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse Clinical Exercise Physiology program, CrossFit is safe for an active person but may not be safe for a 45-year-old with heart disease risks. Dr. Porcari adds, “We’ve seen with a lot of these workouts people go flat-out as fast as they can, but then their form falls apart. You really need to be technically correct with a lot of these exercises or else you’re going to get hurt.”

Take these steps to make sure you stay injury free:

1. Consult a health care professional before starting a workout routine if you are not physically active.
2. Find a certified personal trainer who can teach you proper techniques. Ask about their credentials and references, and look for a trainer that is concerned about form and safety. Certifications to look for include NSCA, ACE, ACSM, and NASM.
3. Don't overexert yourself, watch your form, and gradually increase the intensity of your workout.

<http://www.acefitness.org/prosourcearticle/3542/crossfit-sup-tm-sup-new-research-puts-popular>

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