

To Your Health

December 2009

Checking Your Lists

Shoppers are "making their lists and checking them twice" this time of year - all kinds of lists: shopping lists, menus, to-do lists. Is a "holiday food safety checklist" among your lists?

The basics of food-safe celebrations are in four core practices: clean, separate, cook and chill.

Clean: Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get on hands, cutting boards, knives, counter tops. Frequent cleaning is a must to inhibit the spread of bacteria.

All kitchen helpers must wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Cutting boards, dishes, utensils and counter tops should be washed with hot water and soap after preparing each food item and before going on to the next food.

Remember to give fresh fruits and vegetables a thorough rinse under

running tap water just before eating. Rub firm-skin produce (or scrub with a clean brush) under running tap water.

Separate: Cross-contamination is how bacteria spreads. Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods, like salad ingredients. Using one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry and seafood is one way to reduce cross-contamination.

Cook: Even for experienced cooks, the improper heating and preparation of food means harmful bacteria can survive. A food thermometer is your friend in the kitchen. Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness. For more information, go to www.fightbac.org/content/view/172/96

Chill: Bacteria spreads fastest at temperatures between 40°F and 140°F. Chilling food promptly - within 2 hours - and properly - at a refrigerator temperature of 40°F or below - is a very effective way to reduce the risk of food borne illness. You should have an appliance thermometer for your refrigerator. They are inexpensive and can help you monitor the refrigerator.

Help! An expert is just a call or click away ...

★ ISU Extension **AnswerLine:** 1-800-262-3804 or www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline

★ U.S. Department of Agriculture **Meat and Poultry Hotline:** 1-888-674-6854 or email to mph hotline.fsis@usda.gov or www.AskKaren.gov

★ U.S. Food and Drug Administration: 1-888-SAFEFOOD or www.fda.gov

Happy - Safe - Holidays!

Eating Healthy on the Run

...Busy, busy days ahead this month. Whether your food choices are carry-out, food court, cafeteria at work, or sit-down restaurant, there are smart choices everywhere.

- ★ Think about your food choices for the entire day. If you're planning a special restaurant meal in the evening, have a light breakfast and lunch.
- ★ Tempted by sweet, creamy desserts? Look for smaller portions, or share with someone else.
- ★ Split your order. Share an extra large sandwich or main course with a friend, or take half home for another meal.
- ★ Try a baked potato - topped with steamed broccoli, a sprinkle of cheese, and some salsa for lunch or dinner.
- ★ At the salad bar, pile on dark leafy greens, carrots, peppers and other fresh vegetables. Lighten up on mayonnaise-based and other creamy salads and high-fat toppings. Enjoy fresh fruit as dessert.
- ★ Limit the amount of alcohol you drink. No more than one drink for women and two for men. Alcohol tends to increase your appetite and provides calories without any nutrients. Instead try water with a slice of lemon, flavored sparkling water, club soda, or 100% juice mixed half and half with club soda.
- ★ Refrigerate carry-out or leftovers if the food won't be eaten right away. Toss foods kept at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

...Tips from the American Dietetic Association.

Entertaining Family and Friends

Whether you are short of time or short on money, these tips will help you host a get together without breaking the bank.

- ★ Decide on your budget first, then your invitation list.
- ★ Use coupons or look in grocery store circulars for discounts on fruits, vegetables, other foods that you need.
- ★ Remember that fruits and vegetables in season tend to be cheaper and tasty. Look for oranges, tangerines and tangelos, grapefruit, grapes, broccoli this month.

For more information, go to --

www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings

... ISU Extension's **Spend Smart. Eat Smart.** web site. Recently, a posting was made to the blog about "\$30 serves 8 a Healthy Holiday Dinner." Roast turkey, roasted-garlic mashed potatoes, turkey gravy, bread stuffing, fresh green bean sauté, pasta salad, fruit salad, fresh baked wheat dinner rolls, and "guiltless pumpkin pie" - a traditional and healthy meal! The turkey is roasted. Potatoes are made with low-fat milk and limited fat. Fresh green beans don't have the extra sodium and fat of the soup mixes and French fried onions. The pasta salad contains fresh vegetables, pasta, and legumes with a small amount of prepared salad dressing. The pumpkin pie is crustless - delicious with a dab of low-fat frozen whipped topping. Check it out!

www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings - your source of information for menu planning, getting the most for your food dollars, eating out, handling leftovers safely, recipes. Check out the food demonstration videos under "recipes and snacks" and "recipe and food demonstration of the month."