

Helpline



September 2014
 Newsletter

September is “National Food Safety Education Month®”

National Food Safety Education Month® (NFSEM) was created in 1994 by the National Restaurant Association Education Foundation (NRAEF), to heighten awareness of the importance of food safety education.

Each year, approximately 1 in 6 or 48 million Americans get sick from foodborne illness (also known as food poisoning, and 3,000 people die. Foodborne illness is any illness that can result from eating contaminated food or water.

Harmful bacteria are the most common causes of food poisoning, but other causes include, viruses, parasites, toxins, contaminants, and allergens.

Certain groups of people are more susceptible to foodborne illness. This means that they are more likely to get sick from contaminated food, if they do get sick, the effects are more serious. These groups include:

- Infants & children
- Older adults
- Persons with chronic disease

Foodborne Illness: know the symptoms

Foodborne illness often presents itself with flu-like symptoms. The most common signs and symptoms of foodborne illness or food poisoning are abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, fever, and diarrhea. However, symptoms can get worse; blood in the stool and dehydration can also occur.

If you suspect that you could have foodborne illness, contact your physician or healthcare provider right away.

What are the Long Term Effects of Food Poisoning?

When people get sick from food poisoning, most of them recover without any lasting effects from their illness. For some, however, the effects can be devastating and even deadly.

Here are some serious effects associated with several common types of food poisoning.

- Kidney failure
- Chronic arthritis
- Brain and nerve damage
- Death



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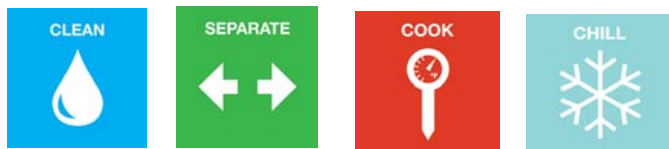
Monica Dawkins
 Extension Faculty Family



The Family & Consumer Science Program and the 4-H Youth Development Program has a New Home!!

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Keep Your Family Food Safer by Following the Four Steps to Food Safety



1. **Clean.** Wash hands and surfaces often.
2. **Separate.** Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods.
3. **Cook.** Raw meat, poultry, seafood, and egg products need to be cooked to the right temperature. Use a food thermometer to ensure foods have reached a high enough temperature to kill any harmful bacteria that may be present.
4. **Chill.** Refrigerate food promptly. Do not leave food at room temperature for more than two hours --one hour when the temperature is above 90 °F (32.2 °C).

Keeping "Bag" Lunches Safe

Whether it's off to school or work, millions of Americans carry "bag" lunches. Food brought from home can be kept safe if it is first handled and cooked properly. Then, perishable food must be kept cold while commuting via bus, bicycle, on foot, or in a car. After arriving at school or work, perishable food must be kept cold until lunchtime.



Why keep food cold?

Harmful bacteria multiply rapidly in the "Danger Zone" — the temperatures between 40 and 140 °F (4.4 °C and 60 °C). So, perishable food transported without an ice source won't stay safe long. Here are safe handling recommendations to prevent foodborne illness from "bag" lunches.

Begin with Safe Food

Perishable food (refrigerated), including meat, poultry and eggs, must be kept cold at all times. Eggs should be purchased cold at the store and kept cold at home.

In between store and home, transport perishable food as fast as possible when no ice source is available. At home, refrigerate perishables promptly. Food should not be left out at room temperature more than 2 hours — 1 hour if the temperature is above 90 °F (32.2 °C). Prepackaged combos are sometimes packed for lunch. These combos often contain perishable foods such as luncheon meats, cheese, and cut fruit that must be kept refrigerated, even though they may be cured or contain preservatives.

Keep Everything Clean

Before beginning to pack lunches, make sure to wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next item. A solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water may be used to sanitize surfaces and utensils. Keep family pets away from kitchen counters

Don't Cross-Contaminate

Harmful bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, utensils, and countertops. Always use a clean cutting board for food that will not be cooked, such as bread, lettuce, and tomatoes, be sure to wash the board after using it to cut raw meat and poultry. Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for meat and poultry.



At lunchtime, discard all used food packaging and paper bags. Do not reuse packaging because it could contaminate other food and cause foodborne illness.

Packing Lunches

Pack just the amount of perishable food that can be eaten at lunchtime. That way, there won't be a problem about the storage or safety of leftovers. After lunch, discard all leftover food, used food packaging, and paper bags. Do not reuse packaging because it could contaminate other food and cause foodborne illness.

It's fine to prepare the food the night before, and store the packed lunch in the refrigerator. Freezing sandwiches helps them stay cold. However, for best quality, don't freeze sandwiches containing mayonnaise, lettuce, or tomatoes. Add these later.

Insulated, soft-sided lunch boxes or bags are best for keeping food cold, but metal or plastic lunch boxes and paper bags can also be used. If using paper lunch bags, create layers by double bagging to help insulate the food. An ice source should be packed with perishable food in any type of lunch bag or box.

Keeping Cold Lunches Cold

Prepare cooked food, such as turkey, ham, chicken, and vegetable or pasta salads, ahead of time to allow for thorough chilling in the refrigerator. Divide large amounts of food into shallow containers for fast chilling and easier use. Keep cooked food refrigerated until time to leave home.

To keep lunches cold away from home, include a small frozen gel pack or frozen juice box. Of course, if there's a refrigerator available, store perishable items there upon arrival.

Some food is safe without a cold source. Items that don't require refrigeration include fruits, vegetables, hard cheese, canned meat and fish, chips, breads, crackers, peanut butter, jelly, mustard, and pickles.

Keeping Hot Lunches Hot

Use an insulated container to keep food like soup, chili, and stew hot. Fill the container with boiling water, let stand for a few minutes, empty, and then put in the piping hot food. Keep the insulated container closed until lunchtime to keep the food hot — 140 °F or above.

Microwave Cooking/Reheating

When using the microwave oven to reheat lunches, cover food to hold in moisture and promote safe, even heating. Reheat leftovers to at least 165 °F. Food should be steaming hot. Cook frozen convenience meals according to package instructions.

Source: Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)

Cyber Fraud - Tips for Creating Strong Passwords



Security threats seem to be regular part of our daily lives, however, rarely does a week go by without some news of

another hacking incident. The increased attention on these incidents makes now a good time to review ways to protect yourself.

Passwords provide the first line of defense against unauthorized access to your computer. The stronger your password, the more protected your computer will be from hackers and malicious software. You should make sure you have strong passwords for all accounts on your computer.

Coming up with a password that is both safe and memorable gets harder and harder the more of them we have to memorize. Combining words, phrases, numbers, and coding them with simple substitutions will ensure that your personal information is safe. It is important to be able to come up with passwords that are personal enough to remember but varied and complex enough to be secure.

Strong Password Tips:

- Make your password long. The recommended minimum is eight characters long, however, 14 is better. Some suggest 25 characters, however, some services have character limits on passwords.
 - Do not develop passwords that contain your user name, real name, or company name.
 - Avoid words that are in the dictionary, even if you add numbers and symbols. There are programs that can crack passwords by going through databases of known words.
 - Use combinations of letters, numbers, and symbols, upper and lower case letters and symbols such as the exclamation mark. Try to vary as much as you can.
- Symbols found on keyboard (!@#?/*%&+=) etc.
- Avoid easy-to-guess words even if they aren't in the dictionary. Avoid pets and relatives names.



Avoid things that can be looked up, such as your birthday or zip code. But you might use that as part of a complex password. Try reversing your zip code or phone number and insert that into a string of letters. Avoid password as the password, or use consecutive keys on the keyboard such as “1234” or “asdfgh”.

- Make sure new passwords are significantly different from previous passwords.
- Never reuse passwords on other accounts.
- Substitute characters. For instance, use the number zero instead of the letter O, or replace S with a dollar sign.
- Think of a sentence and use just the first letter of each word—as in “J&jwuthtgapow” for Jack & Jill went up the hill to get a pail of water.
- Substitute numbers, symbols, and misspellings for letters or words in an easy-to-remember phrase. For example, My son’s birthday is 12 December, 2004 could become Mi\$un’s Brthd8iz12124 (it is OK to use spaces in your password).
- Change passwords frequently. If you feel you must write down your password in order to remember it, make sure you don’t label it as your password, and keep it in a safe place.

Take Five for Education: Healthy Back-to-School Eating Tips



One of the most important ways to encourage children to make healthy choices is for parents to model that behavior. Smart grocery shopping also is important. If you don’t want your children to eat junk food, don’t bring it in the house.

1. Start with Breakfast — Research has shown that people who eat a healthy breakfast have an overall better quality diet and tend to be leaner. Eating breakfast also helps students concentrate at school. An ideal breakfast would be a non-sugary cereal such as corn flakes or Cheerios and fruit. Yogurt drinks and plain frozen waffles are OK. If

your child doesn’t like breakfast, think beyond traditional foods. Even a sandwich will do.

2. Pack a Good Lunch — For children who take their lunch to school, make sure they have a source of protein from a meat, peanut butter, yogurt or cheese. Add a mix of fruits and vegetables. A variety is more appealing to children than a whole apple or orange every day. For something crunchy, try rice cakes, water crackers, popcorn or plain pretzels instead of chips.
3. Study the Lunch Menu — For children who buy food in the cafeteria, talk to them about making good choices. Many schools post their menus online or make them available. Go over the menu and point out healthy foods. Try to stay away from fried foods. After school, follow up and ask what they had for lunch. Praise them for eating healthy food.
4. Provide a Healthy Snack — Go with low energy density foods, which means large portions but low in calories. Good snacks are fruits and vegetables, rice cakes, popcorn, water crackers or saltines, low-fat pudding, fruit juice bars, low-fat mozzarella string cheese or small yogurts.
5. Eat Dinner Together — Make time to sit down at the table without distractions such as television and cell phones. This is a good time for parents to model their healthy eating choices. Serve each plate in the kitchen instead of putting the food on the table family style to control portion sizes. Avoid fast food.

Source: University of Tennessee

Healthy Snack Recipe

Yogurt Parfait



Alternate layers of the following: Yogurt, sliced fruit (bananas, peaches, strawberries, or first cocktail in juice, etc.), cereal (rice crispies or whole grains ex. Cheerios). Top with strawberry or cherry.

UF Extension EFNEP, M. Dawkins



**Are you a master of eating right?
Take this quiz to find out!**

1. True or false: Breakfast is a very important meal.
2. Which of the following foods doesn't belong with the others?
 - A. Apples
 - B. Bananas
 - C. Grape Juice
 - D. Strawberries
3. Approximately how many servings of fruits and vegetables should an active kid get every day?
 - A. 0 to 2
 - B. 1.5 to 3
 - C. 3 to 4.5
 - D. 3.5 to 5

Answers:

1. True! If you're running late in the morning, you still need to have breakfast. Balance whole grains with some fruit or vegetables and perhaps a little protein for a quick and healthy start to your day.
2. B. Grape Juice. All the other foods are whole fruits. Juice doesn't have nearly as much fiber as regular fruit, which means that you miss out on many of its health benefits. Plus, when you drink juice instead of eating fruit, you will get hungry again much more quickly.
3. D. 3.5 to 5. It sounds like a lot, but getting enough fruits and vegetables can be fun. After all, it's really important to eat enough fruits and vegetables every day. They are full of fiber and nutrients, which will help you stay healthy and have the energy you need to have fun.

So, what do you think? Are you a master of eating right?

Sources: Food and Health Communication.com

Back-to-School Brain Food

Good Nutrition and Healthy Eating Tips



It's September and another school year has begun! Amidst all the back-to-school shopping, after-school activities and hours of homework, don't forget to stock the fridge and cabinets with healthy food choices for a head-start this fall.

Provide kids with the nutrients they need to power through a long school day, alert and ready to hit the books and participate in extracurricular activities.

Foods that boost brain power

Staying well-hydrated is extremely important for kids and helps prevent fatigue and keep concentration levels going strong. Skip the sugary soda and energy drinks and give kids a bottle of water instead! Bring a little 'zing' to regular water with a slice or two of lemon, lime or orange.

Complex, whole-grains contain folate and other B vitamins which help improve memory function and are rich in fiber, providing a steady stream of energy so your child can ace that math test. Make the switch to 100% whole wheat bread and look for wholegrain cereals with 5 grams of fiber or more.



For a high-powered brain boost, make sure kids get plenty of choline, found in eggs and nuts. Start the day with some scrambled eggs with a few fresh vegetables mixed in, served over a slice of wholegrain toast.

Another important player in brain development, omega-3 fatty acids are healthy fats found in a variety of foods including cold-water fatty fish (like salmon and tuna), avocado, flaxseed oil or ground flaxseed, nuts (like walnuts and almonds), and heart-healthy oils (like olive oil). Get creative in the kitchen with your kids and encourage them to taste new foods such as avocado or grilled salmon; you never know where their taste buds will take them!

Foods that drain the brain

Now that you've got your brain-boosting list down pat, steer clear of certain items that can quickly drain energy and kids' attention levels, often causing short spikes in activity and then crashing lows from excess sugar and artificial ingredients. Check labels and ingredient lists. Bypass the following items on your next trip to the grocery store:

- Foods with artificial sweeteners or coloring
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Sugary fruit drinks, colas and juices
- Refined white sugars and breads
- Trans fats and partially-hydrogenated oils
- Processed snack foods and luncheon meats

These foods are tempting because they seem to be quick hunger fixes, but in the long run they contribute to weight gain in kids and parents alike. Instead, get your kids involved by fixing snacks together in the evenings. Eating healthy can be fun when it is a family affair!

Sources: Cincinnati School

Miami-Dade County Public Schools



Miami Dade County Public Schools Food & Nutrition Department (M-DCPS FN) has been serving Florida-grown fruits and vegetables through the school meal program and their farm to school initiative since 2009. Miami-Dade County Health Department was awarded the Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant from the Center for Disease Control, and the Miami-Dade County Public Schools of Food & Nutrition Department was awarded a portion of this grant to expand its Farm to School Program.

Activities include: district-wide menu inclusion and distribution of Florida-grown fresh fruits and vegetables, implementation of a pilot program in 40 schools located in the Southern end of the District closest to local growers and farms, the integration of locally grown Farm to School items into the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Garden to Cafeteria procedures and training to use grown herbs and produce items, assisting schools to conduct farmers' markets and Community-Supported Agriculture (CSAs) as healthy fundraisers.

Look out for these locally-grown items in school meals and/or through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program in participating elementary schools:

Corn



Green Beans



Strawberries



Blueberries



Starfruit



Boniato



Yellow and Green Squash



The Corner Store Herbs



Adding herbs to your food is a quick way to move your meal from ordinary to extraordinary! Herbs are leaves of low-growing plants. They can be used fresh

or dried. Dried forms may be whole, crushed, or ground. Herbs flavor foods, which will help you and your family cut back on salt, fat, and sugar.

HOW TO USE:

- Delicate herbs—Basil, Chives, Cilantro, Mint
Add 1 to 2 minutes before the end of cooking.
Or sprinkle them on the food before it is served.
- Less delicate herbs—Oregano, Rosemary
Add to foods in the last 20 minutes of cooking.

MEAL IDEAS:

- Basil: Add to pasta sauce, peas, and zucchini.
- Chives: Try in dips, potatoes, and tomatoes.
- Cilantro: Enjoy in salsas and tomatoes.
- Mint: Add to carrots, fruit salads, and water
- Oregano: Sprinkle on peppers or tomatoes.
- Rosemary: Use on chicken, fish, pork, vegetables, and in bread.

STORAGE:

- Store fresh herbs in an open or mesh plastic bag for a few days.
- Store dried herbs in a tightly covered container for 1 to 2 years. Place in a dark place away from sunlight, such as inside a cupboard or drawer.

Source: UF/IFAS Extension EFNEP/FNP Newsletter

Green Beans with Tomatoes and Basil Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 1 pound green beans
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 onion, small
- 1 14-oz can tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon basil (fresh or 1/2 teaspoon dried)
- 1 tablespoon parsley (fresh or 1/2 teaspoon dried)



Steps:

1. Cook green beans in a large saucepan of boiling water for 5 minutes; Beans will still be crisp. Drain and rinse under cold running water. Set aside.
2. In a large frying pan, heat olive oil over medium heat. Chop onion and add to oil. Cook 2-3 minutes until softened.
3. Drain and chop tomatoes. Add tomatoes, basil and parsley to frying pan. Cook 3 minutes to heat and combine flavors.
4. Stir beans into pan and cook 5-6 minutes.

Source: SNAP-ED CONNECTION