

FOOD

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during the course of a realistic food preparation.

They may fail to correctly address the actual risk, either because of a failure in their technique (e.g., undercooking) or because they are distracted, hurried, or overly confident they are doing the right thing.

The findings of the study reinforce the need for education about the four principles that address the critical points in everyday food handling that will help prevent food-borne illness: wash hands and surfaces often; prevent cross-contamination; cook foods to proper temperatures; and refrigerate promptly.

“Handling Food Safely at Home” Quiz

It does appear that ongoing food safety education is making a difference. Here's a short quiz to test and/or reinforce your food safety savvy.

Directions: Answer “Yes” or “No” to the following questions, then check the correct answers that follow.

1. Is it safe to leave foods such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and dairy foods at room temperature for longer than TWO hours?

2. To prevent CROSS-CONTAMINATION, should you wash cutting boards with HOT SOAPY WATER followed by HOT RINSE WATER between cutting raw meat, poultry or seafood and cutting other foods?

3. Should you thaw meat, poultry and seafood on the kitchen counter?

4. Should you divide large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator?

5. Can you always tell by the color of cooked meat and poultry whether it's safe to eat?

6. Does handwashing help prevent food-borne illness?

Answers to Questions:

1. NO. Protein foods—such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and dairy foods—should not be at room temperature for more than TWO hours. Just ONE bacterium can grow to 2,097,152 bacteria in seven hours!

2. YES. After cutting meat, poultry or seafood, wash the cutting board with HOT SOAPY WATER followed by HOT RINSE WATER before cutting other foods. Or, buy several cutting boards to use for different foods and then wash them all in the dishwasher and dry on heat-dry rather than air-dry.

3. NO. DO NOT thaw meat, poultry, or seafood on the kitchen counter. Thaw them overnight in the refrigerator. Place package on a plate on a lower refrigerator shelf. This stops any juices from dripping on other foods and spreading bacteria. If you thaw food in the microwave, cook it right away. Unlike food thawed in a refrigerator, microwave-thawed foods reach temperatures that encourage bacterial growth.

4. YES. Put leftovers in shallow pans so they cool faster. Limit depth of food to about TWO inches, especially for thicker foods such as stews, hot puddings and layers of meat slices. For greatest safety and quality, eat leftovers in one or two days. Freeze foods for longer storage.

Put leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer promptly after eating. If food is left at room temperature for over TWO hours, bacteria can grow to harmful levels and the food may no longer be safe. Loosely cover leftovers to allow heat to escape and to protect from accidental

contamination during cooling. If you stir refrigerated food to help it cool, use a clean spoon each time. Cover tightly when cooled.

Your refrigerator should be set at no higher than 40 degrees F and your freezer no higher than 0 degrees F.

5. NO. Using a food thermometer helps assure meat and poultry are cooked long enough to be safe AND helps avoid overcooking that can cause dryness and loss of flavor.

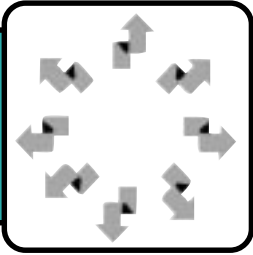
6. YES. Handwashing is considered the single most effective way to help prevent the spread of diseases and can definitely help protect against food-borne illness. Wash your hands with warm soapy water for about 20 seconds before and after handling food and after playing with pets, using the bathroom, changing diapers and smoking.

For More Information:

For more information on preparing food safely at home, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Handling Food Safely at Home; c/o Alice Henneman; NU Lancaster County Extension; 444 Cherrycreek Road; Lincoln, NE 68528-1507. **Everyone sending for information will be entered in a drawing for a home safety kit consisting of a cutting board, food thermometer and a refrigerator thermometer.**

Note: A special “thank you” to Mindy Brashears, Ph.D., Food Safety Extension Specialist, University of Nebraska Department of Food Science and Technology, for reviewing the food safety quiz.

Miscellaneous



GRASSES

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Spray the weedy patches and a few inches beyond these areas to ensure their complete destruction. If the treated areas are not dead in two to four weeks, a second application is necessary. Treated areas can be seeded or sodded seven days after the application.

After the treated areas have been completely destroyed, re-establish the lawn by seeding or sodding. If you plan to sow seed, it's not necessary to dig up the destroyed areas. Small areas can be raked vigorously with a garden rake to remove some of the dead debris and to break the

soil surface. After seeding, work the grass seed into the soil by lightly raking the areas. The best time to sow grass seed is mid-August through mid-September. After seeding, keep the soil moist with frequent, light applications of water. If you plan to lay sod, remove the dead debris before sodding. Late summer and fall are excellent times to lay sod.

Destroying undesirable, perennial grasses in the lawn is difficult. However, if done properly, your efforts should produce an attractive lawn free of weeds. (MJM)



YOUTH

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sugar (19.5 four-pound bags of sugar in one year). Major concepts were reviewed through a game of “snack bingo” which enticed the youth to think of their own snacking habits and ways to improve their food choices.

A camp counselor said “the kids really liked the information and especially loved the ‘Who Wants to be a Healthy Snacker?’ game.” Another commented “the students asked lots of good

questions.” Fred Richardson, NYSP activity director, said “the students really responded to the age appropriate activities and games. They were disappointed the program only lasted two weeks.”

Fourteen one-hour lessons were presented by NEP staff members Sandy Phillips, Mardel Meinke, Karen Wobig, and Lancaster County 4-H Extension Assistant Deanna Karmazin.



FEARS

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provide an atmosphere which is conducive to talking about fears.

Give your child accurate information about fears. Do not use confusing or fear-producing explanations to get your child to be obedient. If you explain death as a long, long sleep, your child may be terrified of going to bed at night.

Select good children's books about fears to read with your child. Books about children's fears can provide honest information and clarify misinformation your child may have heard. They can assure your child that he or she is not the only one experiencing fear. Your child has the opportunity to see others handling fear and to rehearse different solutions to the problem.

Broaden your child's range of skills for coping with fears. Help your child identify his potential strengths. Ask your child, “What do you think would

help you when you are afraid of the dark?” Knowing there are options available will help your child feel more powerful and in control over fearful situations. Play the game, “What if?” with your child. “What if you got lost?” “What if it started to storm?” Children who realize they are resourceful and can do something about frightening situations are better able to overcome their fears.

All of us have experienced fears. As sensitive, caring parents, we want to protect our children from fearful situations. But we cannot always protect our children, nor can we keep them from being afraid. We can, however, reduce our children's fearfulness by helping them express their fears and distinguish real from imaginary dangers. Also, we can help them become increasingly independent and confident about handling frightening situations. (LJ)



HEARING

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windows can cause noise leaks. Hoods and panels on newer equipment reduce noise and should always be replaced after maintenance. Small engines on transfer pumps, augers, and

elevators should be equipped with adequate mufflers. (TD)

SOURCES: Dave Morgan, safety engineer, NU/IANR; North Dakota State University.

4-H Award Nominations

Nominations are needed for the following awards by October 30. Application forms are available at the extension office.

4-H Meritorious Service—presented to individuals or organizations which have exhibited consistent and strong support of the 4-H program. 4-H members are not eligible.

Outstanding 4-H Member—presented to an individual who has excelled in their involvement with the 4-H program and are 14 years of age or older. The basis for selection appraises the variety and depth of 4-H activities.

I Dare You Youth Leadership Award—presented to junior or senior 4-H members who have demonstrated personal integrity, lead well-rounded lives and possess a willingness to assume responsibility. They do not need to hold leadership positions currently, but should be recognized by their peers and adults who work with them as emerging leaders. Two 4-H members will be selected from Lancaster County. (LB)

DEBIT

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You may have to meet financial institution requirements to receive cards with this feature.

Debit card safety tips

Record your debit card transactions in your checkbook register.

Keep your debit card in a safe spot. Do not share your PIN with anyone.

Keep your account number, card expiration date and the telephone number of your institution handy in case your card is lost or stolen.

What do I do if my debit

card is lost or stolen?

Call your institution right away and follow up with a letter. The longer you wait the more money you may lose. If you report your card missing before it is used, you will not be held responsible for any unauthorized use.

If you report your card missing after it is used, the amount you can be held responsible for depends on how quickly you report the loss.

Within two business days after you learn of the loss or theft of your card—you can be

held responsible for no more than \$50 in unauthorized withdrawals.

After two business days, but within 60 days after the institution sends you a statement showing an unauthorized withdrawal—you could lose up to \$500.

After 60 days—you could lose all the money that was taken from your account after the end of the 60 days and before you report your card missing.

Adapted from the Financial Services Education Coalition. (LJ)