



Food & Fitness



Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

April is Soyfoods month, making it an excellent time to try including more soy in your diet. The Food and Drug Administration has authorized the use of health claims about the role of soy protein in reducing the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) on labeling of foods containing soy protein. This is based on the FDA's conclusion these foods, when included in a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of CHD by lowering blood cholesterol levels.

A typical claim on a soy product might read: "Eating 25 grams of soy protein per day may reduce the risk of heart disease." In order for a food to contain this health message, it must contain at least 6.25 grams of soy protein per serving.

Here's a recipe from a soy cookbook called "Favorites from the Heartland" (2nd edition). If you'd like more information on including soyfoods in your meals, call the Nebraska Soybean Board at 1-800-852-2326 or 441-3240 in the Lincoln area. For additional recipes and tips on using soy, you also can visit www.soyfoods.com

Cool Peach Smoothie

1 can (21 oz.) peach fruit pie filling, chilled
1 package (12 oz.) firm silken tofu
1 medium banana
3 cups of ice
Mint leaves, optional

In a food processor or large blender, combine all ingredients (except mint) and blend until smooth, stopping to scrape sides of blender, if necessary. Serve with sprig of mint.

Yield: 6 cups. Each cup provides: 147 calories, 2 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 42 mg sodium, 28 carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 5 g total protein, 4 g soy protein

Focus on Food



Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

Q: Whenever I try to make gelatin with fruit, the fruit either floats on the top or sinks to the bottom. What can I do to make it stay mixed throughout the gelatin?

A: To keep your fruit in place, chill gelatin until it's about the consistency of raw egg whites before adding fruit. This takes 1 to 1-1/2 hours in your refrigerator. If you're in a hurry, set the bowl in ice water and stir as it starts to thicken.

What if your gelatin sets before you got the fruit added? Not to worry...simply melt it again and start over.

If it's too late and your company's almost at the door, it's time to get creative. If the fruit is floating on top, call it "Layered Salad" and pretend you planned it! Or, serve it in individual dishes, topped by yogurt or whipped cream.

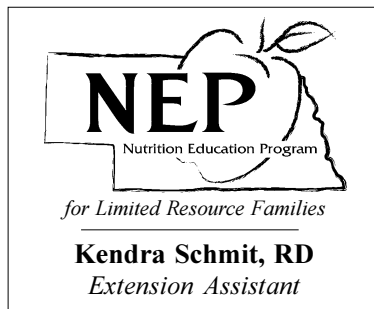
Q: At what temperature should I keep my refrigerator and my freezer?

A: Cold temperatures help keep harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying. A refrigerator temperature of 40 degrees F or lower will slow bacterial growth.

Keep your freezer at 0 degrees F or lower. Freezing will stop most bacterial growth so frozen foods keep longer than those at refrigerator temperature. Freezing does not kill bacteria so it is still important to handle food safely.

Keep an appliance thermometer in your refrigerator and in your freezer to be sure they stay at these recommended temperatures. You can buy a thermometer at a discount, hardware or grocery store.

Let Children Play, Explore and Investigate to Learn About Food!



Children are natural explorers and love to imitate adults. Parents may be frustrated with children in the kitchen when they are cooking supper. Set aside time and make the kitchen a safe place to introduce children to food and cooking. Starting young to develop an interest with food may help reduce the amount of the dreaded food wars when children get older.

The kitchen is a place of sensory surplus, stimulating children to learn through all their senses. Encourage this learning with the following activities.

Sense of Touch

Mystery Box—Create a mystery box by using a shoe box, bucket or paper bag. Gather kitchen items without sharp edges such as a spoon, sponge, vegetable brush, hot pad, measuring spoon, measuring cup and potato masher. Show your child the items before placing them in the mystery box. Let your child reach in and explore all the different shapes and textures with their sense of touch. For older children, you can ask them to find specific items. For younger children, place one item at a time in the mystery box. They will hold the image in their

memory and be rewarded when they can see the item again—their own version of hide and seek!

Sense of Smell

Smelling Jars—Remember how good the kitchen smelled after cooking cinnamon rolls or how your stomach rumbled with the smell of a roast in the oven. Children experience the same reactions to smells coming from the kitchen, but you can create your own game by using food or extracts to show the different smells. For young children let



them smell food like oranges, lemons, cinnamon, chocolate, butter, spices, maple syrup and mustard. For older children you can have them try to guess the scents by closing their eyes or using extracts.

Sense of Sound

Sounds—A lot can be discovered by taking the time to listen to the sounds of the

kitchen. Have children stand outside the kitchen and guess the various kitchen sounds you will demonstrate. To enhance their listening be sure to have quiet pauses in-between the sounds. Try running water, frying an egg, blender, can opener, saying please and thank you, popcorn popping and a teakettle whistle.

Sense of Taste

Foods in Different Forms—Do your children know the same food can be found in different textures and tastes? Sample the same food in different forms to explore the texture and tastes, for example, apples (cut into bite size pieces), apple juice, canned apples and applesauce. Ask your children to think of other foods that come in different forms.

Sense of Sight

Colorful Foods—Show your children colorful foods and talk about all the colors. Pick one color and try to think of foods that color. Talk about foods that come in a variety of colors, such as red, green and yellow apples.

Before and After—Show your children how food can change forms, for example popcorn kernels to popcorn, water to ice cubes, concentrated juice to juice, raw eggs to cooked eggs, bread to toast and uncooked pasta to cooked pasta. Ask the children what differences they see or for younger children talk to them about the changes.

Remember to take the time to nurture your children to learn about food. You will appreciate the benefits!

USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline Gives Advice on Sending Food Gifts to U.S. Military

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Meat and Poultry Hotline provides the following advice and answers to questions for safely mailing food gifts to friends and family serving in the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

"It's important to mail food gifts that are not perishable, can tolerate a range of temperatures and won't break with rough handling," says Elsa Murano, under secretary for food safety.

Perishable foods are those that must be kept at 40 degrees F or below to remain safe to eat—meat, poultry, fish and soft cheeses, for example. These foods cannot be safely left at room temperature for more than two hours, much less for a week or more in the mail. Foodborne bacteria that may be present on these foods grow fastest at temperatures above 40 degrees F and can double every 20 minutes. When this happens, someone eating the food can get sick.

Food gifts that can be safely mailed include homemade cookies and fudge, candy and

low-moisture breads like biscotti, brownies and other bar cookies. Good candidates for mailing include dried products such as trail mix, popcorn, fruits and nuts.

As an alternative to homemade gifts, some families may wish to send a military member's favorite mail order foods. Because of the delivery time and distances between the U.S. and duty stations overseas, do not order any food gifts that must be kept refrigerated.

Murano reminds, "Friends and families must have a specific address for their service members. Mail addressed to 'Any Serviceman' will not be accepted by the U.S. Postal Service."

Food safety specialists at USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline offer the following advice concerning food gifts for armed forces serving away from home, including those in and near Afghanistan.

Recommendations for Food Gifts

• Hard candies and firm homemade sweets such as fudge,

pralines and toffee are safe to mail because their high sugar content prevents bacterial growth.

- Dried fruits such as raisins and apricots, canned nuts and fruit and commercially-packaged trail mix need no refrigeration.
- Dehydrated soups and fruit drink mixes are lightweight and safe to mail. Regional condiments such as hot sauce and Cajun seasonings in packets are useful for spicing up Meals Ready to Eat (MREs).
- Dense and dry baked goods such as brownies, bar cookies and biscotti are good choices for mailing because they will not become moldy. Other suitable baked goods include commercially-packaged cakes and cookies in airtight tins, dry cookies such as ginger snaps and specialty crackers.
- High-moisture baked goods such as banana bread—while safe at room temperature for a few days—should not be mailed because they will most likely mold before delivery. Fragile foods like delicate

see *FOOD GIFTS* on page 11