

## Summer 2009

### Super 7 Steps to Safe Food in the Summer

During hot weather, it is critical to take extra precautions and practice safe food handling when preparing perishable foods such as meat, poultry, seafood and egg products. The warmer weather conditions may be ideal for outdoor picnics and barbecues, but they also provide a perfect environment for bacteria and other pathogens in food to multiply rapidly and cause foodborne illness. Follow the suggestions below to Fight BAC!® (foodborne bacteria) and reduce the risk of foodborne illness this summer.

- ✓ **Wash, Wash, Wash Your Hands** (as in Row, Row, Row Your Boat). Always, wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- ✓ **Marinating Mandate.** Always marinate food in the refrigerator. Don't use sauce that was used to marinate raw meat or poultry on cooked food. Boil used marinade before applying to cooked food.
- ✓ **Hot, Hot, Hot.** When grilling foods, preheat the coals on your grill for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the coals are lightly coated with ash.
- ✓ **Temperature Gauge.** Use a food thermometer to ensure that food reaches a safe internal temperature. (Contact the Extension Office for a list.)
- ✓ **Where's the Beef? Chicken and Fish?** Hamburgers should be cooked to 160°F, while large cuts of beef such as roasts and steaks may be cooked to 145°F for medium rare or to 160°F for medium. Poultry must reach a temperature of 165°F. Fish should be opaque and flake easily.

- ✓ **Stay Away from that Same Old Plate.** When taking foods off the grill, do not put cooked food items back on the same plate that held raw food, unless it has been washed with hot, soapy water first. And in hot weather (above 90°F) foods should never sit out for more than one hour before going in the refrigerator.

**Icebox Etiquette.** A full cooler will maintain its cold temperatures longer than one that is partially filled so it is important to pack plenty of extra ice or freezer packs to ensure a constant cold temperature. Keep the cooler out of the direct sun.

*Source: Fightbac.org*

### Homemade Ice Cream: Treat or Tragedy?

Nothing tastes better in this hot weather than homemade ice cream. At one time, uncooked eggs were used to make ice cream, but now we know in order to reduce the risk of salmonella poisoning, a custard-based recipe, an eggless recipe or even using an egg substitute should be used.

"Homemade ice cream is a special treat for many, but every year it causes several outbreaks of salmonella infection with up to several hundred victims at church picnics, family reunions, or other large gatherings," says John Sheehan, director of the Food and Drug Administration's Division of



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Dairy and Egg Safety. The ice cream ingredient responsible for the outbreaks: raw (uncooked) or undercooked eggs. *The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports 45-50 outbreaks annually in the United States, resulting in illness in more than 1300 people.*

A person infected with Salmonella Enteritidis (SE), the strain of salmonella found most frequently in raw eggs, usually has fever, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps beginning 12 to 72 hours after eating or drinking a contaminated food or beverage. The infection generally lasts four to seven days, and most people recover without any treatment. But for those at high risk--infants, older people, pregnant women, and people with a weakened immune system - it can be life-threatening.

While commercially manufactured ice cream is typically made with pasteurized eggs or egg products, recipes for homemade ice cream often use raw eggs in the base mixture. Homemade ice cream can be made with eggs without the side effects of salmonella infection by preparing it safely.

Here are some suggestions for safe alternatives to using raw eggs in your homemade ice cream:

- Use pasteurized shell eggs or pasteurized egg substitutes in recipes calling for raw eggs. Pasteurized shell eggs can be found in the dairy section while egg substitutes can be both refrigerated or frozen, so look for these products in the dairy case near the regular eggs or in the frozen food section. The FDA requires that pasteurized shell eggs be individually marked or specially packaged to prevent intermingling with unpasteurized eggs. The pasteurized egg product needs to be the whole egg and not just the whites or the texture of the ice cream will not be rich and creamy (see more about ice cream texture below).
- Even when using pasteurized eggs, the FDA and the USDA advise consumers to start with a cooked base for optimal safety, especially if serving people at high

risk for food borne illness. Additionally, it's important to only use pasteurized milk and cream products in making your homemade ice cream.

- Use a recipe that contains a cooked custard base. The custard base must reach 160°F to kill the salmonella bacteria. Resist the temptation to taste-test it during preparation because the custard isn't fully cooked and could still contain salmonella. After cooking, chill the custard thoroughly before freezing.
- Don't give up such a delicious summer treat.

**Ice cream's texture** comes from the use of milk fat and sugar. Although you may want to use 1% or skim milk, the resulting ice cream would have lots of ice crystals in it, making it flat and lower in volume. This is because the more fat in the milk, the smoother the frozen ice cream will be. Therefore, instead of whole milk, try 2% milk instead of half and half or whipping cream. The end result will still be smooth, but lower in fat.

### Ice Cream in a Bag

2% chocolate milk (can also use whole white milk with fruit or syrup)  
Snack sized zip lock bag  
Quart sized freezer zip lock bag  
Ice  
Rock salt

1. Pour ½ cup milk into snack bag. Close tightly.
2. Put 2-3 cups of ice into the quart sized freezer bag.
3. Sprinkle a little rock salt on the ice.
4. Slip the closed baggie of milk into the bag with the ice. Close tightly.
5. Shake vigorously until the milk is frozen, being careful not to break either bag.
6. Remove the small bag with the ice cream. You'll want to wipe the salty water from the outside of the bag and the baggie seal so your ice cream won't taste salty. Unzip the ice cream baggie, insert spoon and

eat.

\*\*An added bonus - no dishes

### Frozen Custard Ice Cream (makes 1 ½ to 2 quarts)

6 eggs  
2 cups milk  
¾ cup sugar  
¼ teaspoon salt  
2 cups whipping cream  
1 tablespoon vanilla

1. In medium saucepan, beat together eggs, milk, sugar and salt.
2. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture is thick enough to coat a metal spoon with a thin film and reaches at least 160 degrees F.
3. Cool quickly by setting pan in ice or cold water and stirring for a few minutes.
4. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, at least one hour.
5. When ready to freeze, pour chilled custard, whipping cream and vanilla into 1-gallon ice cream freezer can.
6. Freeze according to manufacturer's directions.

#### VARIATIONS

**Banana Nut:** Reduce vanilla to 1 ½ teaspoons. Cook and cool as above. Stir three large ripe bananas, mashed and ½ cup chopped toasted pecans into custard mixture. Freeze as above.

**Cherry:** Reduce vanilla to 1 teaspoon. Add 2 tablespoons almond extract. Cook and cool as above. Partially freeze. Add 2 pounds pitted pureed dark sweet fresh cherries OR one can (16 to 17 oz.) pitted dark sweet cherries, drained and chopped. Complete freezing.

**Strawberry:** Omit vanilla. Cook and cool as above. Partially freeze. Add 2 cups sweetened, crushed fresh strawberries. Complete freezing.

Source: Missouri Families ENewsletter, June 29, 2009.

## FOOD PRESERVATION

Contact the Extension Office at 601-635-2267 for current canning and freezing recommendations. Open kettle canning is no longer recommended due to safety. Canned foods must be processed either in a pressure canner or a water bath canner.

Remember, better to be safe than sorry when it comes to the food safety!

## Prevent Drowning

In 2008 there were 26 deaths from drowning in natural waters in Mississippi. There are already 20 this far into 2009. According to **SAFE KIDS USA**, from 1990 through 2000, child drowning was the second leading cause of death for persons 20 years old and younger. The study also showed that 91% of these deaths were unintentional and not related to boating.

**SAFE KIDS USA** revealed that 1 in 4 incidents resulted in submersive incidents, leaving many of the victims with permanent disabilities. The study also relayed that 88% of child drowning were under some type of supervision. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that this summer 90% of our young kids will be exposed to water in one form or another and 48% of these will be in water without the services of a lifeguard. Another study related to child and youth drowning revealed that 20% of near-drowning survivors suffer severe, permanent neurological disabilities. **SAFE KIDS USA** has recommendations for the safety and welfare of children and youth involved in water activities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WATER SAFETY

### General Tips

- Enroll your children in swimming lessons by the age of 8 years. Most municipalities have certified Red Cross instructors or

other certifications and offer classes for swimming lessons.

- Allow children to swim only in designated and supervised facilities.
- Parents and/or guardians should learn infant and regular CPR.
- Educate the kids on all the rules of water safety such as ---  
~Always swim with a buddy or an adult present.  
~In any type of open water, always wear a **Personal Flotation Device (PFD)**.
- **Never** dive into a lake, river or ocean.
- If someone is in trouble in the water, throw something that floats to them. A child should never enter the water and attempt to save someone.
- Air-filled swimming aids, like water wings and inner tubes are not safety devices and should never be used as a substitute for a **PFD**.
- Rescue equipment and emergency telephone numbers should be kept in a prominent place at the pool and also in the watercraft.

### Enclosed Pool Tips

- As in other types of water, allow the kids to swim in designated and supervised pools.
- Four-sided fencing at least 5 feet high should be around the pool and equipped with self-closing and self-latching gates.
- Install barriers around the pool, in addition to fencing, such as alarms, pool covers, door alarms and/or locks.



Some studies have revealed that many parents are overconfident about their children's safety and their abilities around water. As mentioned earlier, even though drowning is the second leading cause of injury-related deaths for children ages 1 to 14, more than half (55%) of parents say that they do not worry a lot about their child drowning.

Drowning most commonly occurs in recreational settings, often in pools and open bodies of water. National data suggest that more than 385 children ages 14 and under drown each year while participating in water

recreation, such as swimming and boating and half (49%) of these deaths are among children 5 to 14.

Adults must install multiple layers of protection around home pools and be consistent in using barriers that do exist. Ninety-eight percent of pool- or spa- owning parents report they have taken adequate steps to ensure children's safety. Most responses reflect a lack of actual environmental modifications. Nearly two-thirds (61%) of these parents have no isolation fencing, and 43% have no self-closing and self-latching gates.

Adults must increase the quality of their supervision of children. Approximately 9 out of 10 deaths reviewed occurred while children were being supervised.

Parents and caregivers must rigidly enforce the use of **PFD's**. Many tweens (10 to 15's) admit that they never wear PFDs (50%) when riding personal watercraft (ski-doo's), participating in water sports (37%) or on a boat (16%). The parents recognize the importance of PFDs, but don't always enforce it or present a positive example in front of them.

### Remember

- *Designate a responsible person to actively supervise kids around water.*
- *Ensure a safe environment by installing all the safety features for pools discussed above.*

## Safe Handling of Household Chemicals

Each year new environmental regulations are created that affect the way industry creates the goods that we consume. Industry is expected by private citizens, like us, to handle their hazardous chemicals and waste properly. Do we ever stop to think how we handle our home chemicals and waste and how we may dispose of them?

We have many household products that can be hazardous, depending on how we store and dispose of them. We should be familiar

with them. Following is a list of probable products that we might have and need to get familiar with their location and purpose:

- Automotive fluids such as oil, anti-freeze, windshield washer solution, brake fluid and maybe transmission fluid.
- Household cleaners – Bleach, ammonia, disinfectants, air fresheners, carpet fresheners, window cleaner, furniture polish.
- Laundry products – Detergents, fabric softeners, etc.
- Health & Beauty products – Hair spray, fingernail polish and removers, hair coloring and medications.
- Lawn and garden products – Pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides, oil and gasoline, etc.
- Outdoor cooking products – Charcoal briquettes, charcoal lighter, propane gas, etc.
- Home maintenance products - paint, paint removers, stains, varnish, rodent poisons, etc.

As we look at these products, we may not stop to think or consider that these are dangerous or hazardous, but with misuse they can be a problem.

**READ THE PRODUCT LABELS** and handle hazardous products very carefully. Three words to look for: **DANGER-WARNING-CAUTION.**

**Poison** – can injure or kill if absorbed through the skin, injected or inhaled.

**Toxic** – can cause injury or death if swallowed, inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

**Irritant** – causes soreness or swelling of skin, eyes, mucous membranes or the respiratory system.

**Flammable** – easy to catch fire and tends to burn very fast.

**Flammable Liquid** – has a flash point below 140°F (100°F – for US DOT purposes).

**Combustible liquids** – has a flash point from 140°F (100°F for US DOT purposes).

**Corrosive** - a chemical or its vapors that can cause a material to be destroyed.

### **OTHER TIPS FOR HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL SAFETY -**

- **Buy only what you need** - Overbuying creates a surplus that may or may not be used.
- **Keep out of reach of children** – Obviously, chemicals can be dangerous, so they should be stored out of reach of children. Teach your children the dangers that they present. It's also a good idea to keep emergency phone numbers close by so that if emergency is needed, you have it conveniently to you.
- **Don't store chemicals with food** – All of your household chemicals, as well as garden or yard pesticides, must be separated from food products.
- **Don't store flammable liquids or gases inside the home** – Gasoline, kerosene, propane gas, automotive fluids, charcoal lighter should be segregated and not inside the home. Containers for your gasoline or kerosene should be stored in approved containers, like Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- **Keep chemicals in original containers** – All the chemicals should be maintained in their **original** containers for obvious reasons. However, if a chemical has to be relocated to another container, make sure that is appropriate to hold the substance and that it is relabeled for identification.
- **Recycle** – Many products are recyclable. Contact the local environmental authorities for assistance on the acceptable avenue for recycling.
- **Use alternate products** – Some alternatives for less hazardous products are available. An example that we use is pouring baking soda and vinegar down our drains to keep them clear as opposed to buying Drano or other commercial brands of drain cleaners.
- **Dispose of products properly** – Hazardous products should never be deposited down drains or poured out on the ground. Many products shouldn't even be disposed of in the trash or down the toilet. We should save these leftovers and contact the local environment services for directions of disposal or check on dates for hazardous waste "Amnesty Days." Empty containers can be triple washed, a hole punched in the bottom of the plastic ones, allow them to dry and you can

dispose of them in your garbage, without possible repercussions from your local waste management people.

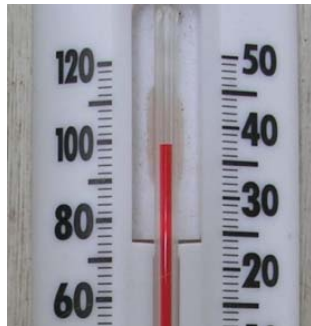
- **Post emergency phone numbers in prominent locations** – As mentioned above, make a note card of the emergency phone numbers for the pertinent agencies in your area and place these in locations around phones and other high profile locations in the home for easy access.

For programming on **Healthy Homes**, contact Susan Cosgrove at the Newton County Extension Office.

## The Heat IS ON!!!

Did you know that heat stroke symptoms can seem like those of a heart attack?

As children and young adults, we think we are invincible from the heat, sun and humidity. But, heat stroke can affect everyone from infants and the elderly to athletes and workers whose jobs are mostly outside. In Mississippi, where temperatures go from temperate to terrible in a day, knowing how to avoid, recognize and treat heat stroke is vital in surviving summer.



Heat stroke happens when our body's cooling system fails, raising our body heat to dangerously high levels. The medical name for it is hyperthermia, which means an abnormally high body temperature. When we've been outside working, exercising or playing when it is very hot outside, and we haven't had enough water to drink or time to cool off, a heat stroke can happen.

The best way to manage heat stroke, however, is to prevent it. Air-conditioning is one of the best protective factors against heat-related illness and death. Even a few hours a day in air conditioning can greatly reduce the risk. Electric fans may provide comfort, but

when temperatures are in the high 90s fans do not prevent heat-related illness.

During excessive heat events, the following prevention strategies can save lives:

- Visit air-conditioned buildings in your community if your home is not air-conditioned. These may include: senior citizen centers, movie theaters, libraries, shopping malls.
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Drink lots of fluids. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. If a doctor limits your fluid intake, make sure to ask how much to drink when it's hot. Avoid beverages containing caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar. These drinks cause dehydration.
- Ask your doctor or other health care provider if the medications you take could increase your susceptibility to heat-related illness.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing.
- Visit at-risk individuals at least twice a day. Watch for signs of heat-related illness such as hot, dry skin, confusion, hallucinations, and aggression.
- Call 9-1-1 if medical attention is needed.

## Boomerang kids? Get ready for boomerang parents

Boomerang kids. You've probably read articles about them or may even have one yourself. That's where parents reopen their formerly empty nests to adult children who are trying to pay off student loans or bills, save for a down payment or regroup after losing their job.

Recently, a similar – if inverted – trend has emerged where millions of older parents have moved in with their adult children. Social scientists call them "boomerang parents."

There are numerous reasons for this societal shift: Many people's nest eggs have diminished so significantly they can no longer afford basic necessities like rent, food and

medicine. Others have seen their net worth drop because of plummeting real estate values or from borrowing too much against their home's equity. And still others have been completely priced out of retirement housing or nursing homes and have nowhere else to turn.

Multiple generations living together is nothing new, especially in certain cultures. But for family members used to their own independence, living together again can put emotional – and financial – strains on their relationships.

Here are a few things to consider before merging households:

Open communications. Just as with marriage, you should candidly discuss any potential issues or personality clashes and settle former disagreements **before** moving in together. Adult children and parents alike are used to running their households a certain way, so flexibility and mutual respect are essential.

Set house rules. Make sure both sides understand the terms of your "contract" for living together. For example:

- Consider divvying up chores and responsibilities, keeping in mind physical limitations.
- Allocate space and scheduling to ensure everyone's privacy, including young children in the household.
- If you have a history of arguing, agree which topics will be off limits.
- If grandparents are to provide childcare, set boundaries on what's expected so neither party feels taken advantage of.
- If you'll be caring for older parents, make sure to build in adequate relief time so you won't feel overwhelmed.

Discuss finances frankly. Chances are you're living together at least partly to economize, whether to pay off bills or boost savings. But don't mistake free rent as license to go on a spending spree. You might want to develop a joint household budget, identifying sources of income, shared expenses and savings goals for each party.

Understand tax implications. If you become your parents' primary caregiver and provide more than half their annual support, you may be able to claim them as dependents, which could significantly lower your income tax. The rules are complicated, so consult a tax professional or review Publication 503 at the IRS website ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)) to see if you qualify.

There are many potential personal and financial rewards to becoming a boomerang family. Just be sure you understand all the implications before signing on.

*Source: Practicalmoneyskills.com, June 2009.*

## Landscaping Under Trees? Loose and Natural is the Way

An easy way to establish foreground interest in a yard is to make a feature out of existing trees. Rather than addressing each tree as a separate item, unify them into a large landscape mass by planting underneath a group of trees. A large planting can be much more satisfying and appear less arbitrary than the "10 little Indians" effect of separate treatment around each tree.

For example, homeowners confronted with three or four lonely pine trees sentried across their lawn should key their design from nature. Instead of circling plants around the base of each tree, which is the visual equivalent of a tractor tire around the tree base, drift plants casually underneath the tree canopy.

Since the planting will be informal and not rigid or geometrical (nature doesn't plant material that is loose and informal in growth habit—for instance, the large azaleas (*Indica*, *Obtusum*, and Glenn Dale hybrids). Give some attention to color selection if a blooming plant is chosen. Drifting colors in groups of three or four looks more informal than alternating two colors throughout the entire bed.

In a large area with strong vertical elements (a bed that will comprise several tall, straight-trunked trees like pine trees), it may be

necessary to introduce a plant material—a smaller tree for instance—that will create contrast between the strong upright forms of the trees and the shrub level. This is called understory planting.

The natural understory tree throughout much of the South is the flowering dogwood. In addition to the spectacular spring show of color, dogwoods grown as understory can be expected to develop their own relaxed shape as they stretch their branches in an effort to find light.

Many other suitable plants (redbud, sourwood) can be used for understory planting. But whatever materials are chosen, develop boldness in the planting pattern. Don't belittle your shrubs by forcing them to cower at the foot of a tree—develop the bed to be as imposing as the trunks they tie together.

### Late Summer & Fall Vegetables

Keep your vegetable garden harvested regularly to keep your vegetables productive. Foot long okra and squash as big as baseball bats causes production and quality to go down. Harvesting every two days is a must for these crops. Harvest vegetables at their peak of maturity for maximum nutrition, quality and to keep plants productive. Many crops benefit from a side-dressing of nitrogen fertilizer (one pint per 100 feet of row).

Begin preparing now for the fall garden. Do not plant the same vegetable type in the same spot year after year! Soil-borne diseases and nematodes will build up and eventually cause major problems. Add compost, composted manure, cottonseed meal, or other fertilizers to the garden spot before tilling. Also, if you thought plant growth was poor this spring, check the pH of your garden soil, and add lime if the report indicates a strongly acidic soil.

Besides transplanting tomatoes in July, other vegetables to transplant this month include eggplant (7/15 - 8/1) and peppers (7/1-8/1). Crops that can be started from seed this month include snap and lima beans (7/15 -

8/15), cantaloupes (7/15 - 8/1), southern peas (7/1 - 8/1), pumpkin (7/1 - 8/1), summer squash (7/15 - 8/15), winter squash (7/1 - 7/15), and watermelon (7/1 - 8/1). If you are growing lots of pumpkins for the Halloween market, you need to get them planted by July 15.

July and August are hot and dry so be sure your vegetables get one inch of water per week. This hot hard work will reward you with a bumper crop of vegetables in the first cool days of autumn.

*Source: Wayne Porter, Area Horticulture Agent*

### Upcoming Events

**July 21** – Christmas in July workshop – Newton –2 sessions; limited space; fee will be charged

**July 23-24** – Kids in the Kitchen – Extension Office

**July 31** – Newton State Dairy Show

**August 7** – Home Buyer Education Class - Extension Office – 9am – 1pm

**August 13 – 14** – ServSafe Food Safety Certification Class – Extension Office; registration deadline – July 30

**September 11** – Home Buyer Education Class – Extension Office

Call Newton County Extension Office for details – 601-635-2267.



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