



# Family Nutrition In Action

September 2003, Vol 7, No 9



This newsletter is supported with funding from the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education program, USDA's Food Stamp Program, Florida Department of Children and Families, and University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, in collaboration with state, county, and local agencies. The Food Stamp Program gives nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-800-342-9274 (toll-free).



## September is National Food Safety Education Month

These questions and answers are about some of the things you can do to keep food safe to eat in your home.

### 1) Why is it important to keep the refrigerator temperature at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or less?

Bacteria in food will increase quickly if the temperature is higher than 40 degrees Fahrenheit. A temperature of 40 F or less will cause the growth of most bacteria to be slower. You are less likely to get sick with fewer bacteria in the food.



### 2) What is the way to clean a cutting board after using it to cut raw meat, poultry, or fish?

Always wash and sanitize cutting boards after using them for raw foods. Wash the board in hot soapy water. Rinse. Sanitize using bleach solution. (1 teaspoon bleach per quart of water) Allow to air dry.

### 3) What is the best way to wash hands?

Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food. Be sure to wash hands after going to the bathroom, blowing your nose,

changing diapers, or handling pets. Thoroughly scrub hands, wrists, fingernails, and in between fingers. Wear rubber or plastic gloves if you have an infection or a cut on your hands. Wash hands before putting on the gloves. Also, wash gloved hands just as often as bare hands.

### 4) What is wrong with thawing meat, poultry or fish on the counter?

Bacteria can increase very quickly at room temperature. Do not thaw meat, poultry or fish on the counter or in the sink without cold water. Choose one of these methods:

- Thaw foods in the refrigerator overnight.
- Thaw foods in a plastic bag that is watertight. Put the package in the sink or a container that is deep enough to cover the package with cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes.
- Thaw foods in the microwave. Follow directions on the package. There should be at least two inches of space around the food for the heat to circulate. After thawing in the microwave, the food should be cooked immediately.

### 5) How can I explain to my family the importance of using a thermometer when cooking ground beef?



Cook ground beef to an inside temperature of at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit. Using a food thermometer is crucial. The color of the cooked meat is not the best way to tell if it is cooked enough. Some ground meat may turn brown before reaching a safe internal

temperature. Research also shows that some ground meat patties may stay pink inside even when cooked to 160 degrees F. When eating out, order your ground beef to be cooked well done.

#### **6) What is the 2-Hour Rule?**

Throw away any perishable foods left at room temperature longer than 2 hours. When temperatures are above 90 degrees F, throw away food after 1 hour.

#### **7) Is it safe to eat raw eggs?**

No. Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. Do not prepare or eat recipes where the eggs are served raw or only partially cooked. Cook fried eggs for 2 or 3 minutes on both sides. Cook scrambled eggs until they're firm all the way through. Boil eggs for seven minutes.

When preparing cakes, pies, or homemade cookies, don't taste the batter, filling or raw cookie dough if it contains, raw, unpasteurized eggs.

#### **8) What are some safety tips for fresh produce?**

Some dense raw vegetables like potatoes and onions can be stored at cool room temperatures. Other raw vegetables should be put in the refrigerator.

Wash fresh vegetables and fruit under cool, running water before preparing or eating. Do not use soap, detergents, or bleach solutions. For thick or rough-skinned



vegetables and fruits, use a small vegetable brush to remove surface dirt. Try to cut away any damaged or bruised areas on produce. Bacteria grow well in such places.

Refrigerate or freeze cooked vegetables and fruit within two hours.

#### **For additional information:**

#### **Call the following toll-free hotlines:** **1-888-Safefood The Food and Drug Administration Hotline**

- Safe handling of seafood, fruits, and vegetables
- Rules that govern food safety in restaurants and grocery stores

#### **1-800-535-4555 The USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline**

- Safe handling of meat and poultry and many other consumer food issues

#### **Go on the World Wide Web:**

#### **Senior Food Safety**

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/seniors.html>

#### **US FDA Center for Food Safety**

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov>

#### **Food Safety and Inspection Service**

[www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov)

#### **Federal Food Safety Information**

[www.FoodSafety.gov](http://www.FoodSafety.gov)

#### **Partnership for Food Safety Education**

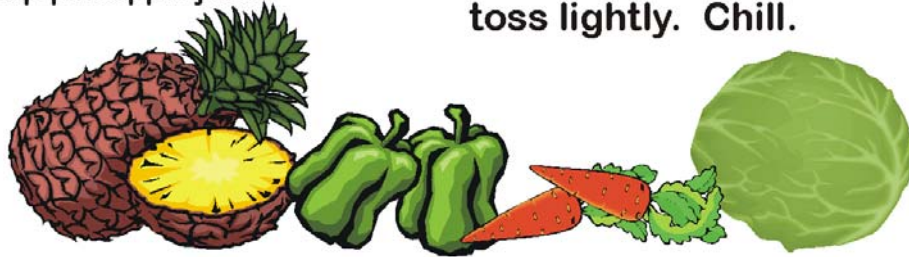
[www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org)

## Pineapple Slaw

### Pineapple Slaw (8 servings)

¼ cup green peppers, chopped  
¾ cup apples, chopped  
3 cups cabbage, shredded  
1½ cups carrots, shredded  
1¼ cups pineapple tidbits  
⅛ tsp. pepper  
¼ cup pineapple juice

1. Toss together green peppers, apples, cabbage, carrots and pineapple.
2. Combine pineapple juice and pepper.
3. Pour dressing on salad and toss lightly. Chill.



1.

---

**For additional information, contact your local County Extension Office:**



The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Employment Opportunity \_ Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, IFAS, Florida A. & M. UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM, AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING.