

Holiday cooking tips

The holiday season is near and presents a number of food safety challenges for those preparing, storing, handling, transporting and serving foods.

While Americans enjoy a safe food system, each year some Kentucky families experience illness from their holiday meal, especially persons at the highest risk of being affected by foodborne illness - the elderly, children, and individuals with weakened immune systems, including pregnant women.

Food is a common feature for most American holiday celebrations and the Cabinet for Health Services' Food Safety Branch is providing food safety tips to assure safe holiday meals. They are:

Clean: Wash hands and food-contact surfaces often. Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, knives, sponges, and counter tops.

Separate: Don't cross-contaminate. Don't let bacteria spread from one food product to another. This is especially true for raw meat, poultry and seafood. Keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods.

Cook: Cook to proper temperatures. Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness.

Chill: Refrigerate promptly. Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep more harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying. Refrigerators should be set at 40 degrees F and the freezer at 0 degrees F, and the accuracy of the settings should be checked occasionally with a thermometer. Pot-luck dishes are common during the holiday season and care should be taken to ensure that foods are transported and held to assure cold foods remain cold and cooked foods remain hot.

Baked goods: FDA advises consumers not to eat uncooked cookie dough, homemade or commercial, or batter made with raw fresh eggs because raw fresh eggs may contain bacteria that can cause an intestinal infection called salmonellosis. Thorough cooking kills the bacteria that cause the infection.

Egg Nog: Traditional eggnog made with raw eggs also presents the same risk to consumers - salmonellosis. While cooking can destroy the disease-causing bacteria, consumers can still become ill when the eggnog is left at room temperature for several hours before being consumed. Safe alternatives are pasteurized eggnog beverages sold in grocery stores; these products should also be kept refrigerated.

Apple cider and other juices: Apple cider is often served during the holiday season. Most apple-cider and juices are pasteurized or otherwise treated to destroy harmful bacteria. Treated juice is shelf-stable.

Unpasteurized cider or juice must have this warning on the label: **WARNING:** This product has not been pasteurized and therefore, may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened

immune systems. Turkey: Thawing the turkey completely before cooking is necessary to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. If a turkey is not properly thawed, the outside of the turkey will be done before the inside, and the inside will not be hot enough to destroy disease-causing bacteria. Allow the correct amount of time to properly thaw and cook a whole turkey. For example, a 20-pound turkey needs two to three days to thaw completely when thawed in the refrigerator at a temperature of no more than 40 degrees F. A stuffed turkey needs 4 to 5 1/2 hours to cook completely.

To check a stuffed turkey to see if it is fully cooked, insert a food thermometer into the inner thigh area near the breast of the turkey but not touching bone. The turkey is fully cooked when the internal temperature reaches 180 degrees F and the stuffing reaches 165 degrees F. The turkey should be held at 140 degrees F until served.

All raw fruits and vegetables must be thoroughly washed prior to preparation and serving. Unclean hands are often the source of food contamination - wash hands often and thoroughly.

Leftover turkey and stuffing should be stored separately in shallow dishes or platters. To reheat turkey or serve in a hot dish, rapidly heat to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F, assuring it is heated thoroughly.

Oysters and Seafood: Be sure to cook oysters thoroughly at home or have them cooked thoroughly when eating out. Buy only fresh seafood that is refrigerated or properly iced. Always cook fish thoroughly. Cooking fish until it is opaque and flaky helps destroy any bacteria that may be present. People with liver disorders or weakened immune systems are especially at risk for becoming ill and should avoid eating raw oysters or shellfish.

Mail-order food gifts: Care should be taken with mail-order food gifts which can include meat, poultry, fish and other perishables like cheese, fruit, and chocolate. The gift giver should alert the recipient to the pending arrival of the food gift; the recipient should open the package immediately to make sure that, foods requiring refrigeration arrives in a chilled state.

Additional food safety information for consumers is available through the Food Safety Branch at 502-564-7181 or your local health department.



Staff Sgt. David Owens was the guest speaker at the last Kiwanis Club meeting. He stressed the importance of preserving our Civil War burial sites. He also showed and explained many war uniforms and accessories. He asked for any help anyone can give on un-documented Civil War grave sites. Phone 256-9870 if you have any information. Below he is shown at the Burr Hill grave site of Capt. Lewis Myers of Co. 'G'.



Email News to
mvsignal@sun-spot.com

Do You Know?

Winter Weather Definitions

When you listen to a typical forecast, and you hear that there is a chance of snow, do you know what the National Weather Service (NWS) is saying? This is a guide that explains the different winter weather terms used by the NWS.

The word snow in a NWS forecast, without a qualifying word such as occasional or intermittent, means that the fall of snow will be of a steady nature, and will probably continue for several hours without letup. Accumulations will be fairly uniform over a wide area, and the expected accumulations will be given in the forecast.

Snow flurries are defined as snow falling for short durations at intermittent periods. Although visibility may be reduced at times, any accumulations will be small, thus accumulations will not be mentioned in the forecast.

Snow showers and snow squalls are brief, intense falls of snow and are comparable to summer rain showers. Squalls are accompanied by gusty surface winds. Accumulations will vary greatly from one area to another, just as summer thunderstorms will drop significant rain in one area, and bypass others. Accumulations will be an average expected for the area, with higher amounts very possible.

Blowing and drifting snow generally occur together and result from strong winds and falling snow, or loose snow on the ground. Blowing snow is defined as snow lifted from the surface by the wind and blown out to a degree that horizontal visibility is greatly restricted. Drifting snow is used to indicate that strong winds will blow the snow into significant drifts.

Blizzards are the most dramatic and perilous of all winter storms, characterized by strong winds of at least 35 miles an hour, bearing blowing snow that will be reducing visibility to less than 1/4 mile for at least 3 hours. This can be new snow, or snow already on the ground being picked up by the strong winds.

Freezing rain or freezing drizzle is rain or drizzle occurring when surface temperatures are below freezing. The moisture falls in liquid form, but freezes upon impact, resulting in a

coating of an icy glaze on all exposed objects. This can range from a thin glaze, to ice of several inches thick. A heavy accumulation of ice, especially when accompanied by high winds, devastates trees and transmission lines.

Sleet (ice pellets) can be easily identified as frozen rain drops which bounce when hitting the ground or other objects. Sleet does not stick to trees or power lines, but sleet in sufficient depth does cause hazardous driving conditions.

Any road-icing condition is, extremely hazardous, as most drivers and pedestrians understand. Sometimes, precipitation does not occur, yet icing becomes a serious tragedy. Sometimes, the moisture within a heavy fog will freeze on road surfaces, or snow on roadways may become melted with traffic, which then re-freezes as ice, and is polished by the automobile tires, turning the roadway into a veritable skating rink. This condition is known as Black Ice and any driver during the winter season should be on the alert for its development.

When the NWS feels that winter weather will threaten an area, then watches or warnings will be issued. A Winter Storm Watch means that severe winter weather conditions may affect your area. This will include the elements of freezing rain, sleet, or heavy snow, which may occur separately or in combination. A Winter Storm Warning means that severe winter weather conditions are imminent. A Blizzard Warning means that considerable falling and/or blowing snow, and sustained winds of at least 35 miles per hour are expected for several hours.

For more information on winter weather, visit us on the Internet at:
NWS www.nws.noaa.gov
(or www.weather.gov)
FEMA www.fema.gov
Red Cross www.redcross.org

Best Wishes from the Signal Staff



Seasons Greetings



As we celebrate the joyous holiday season, my deputies and I would like to wish each and everyone a very Merry Christmas. May your days be filled with joy, peace and the best of health.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

from
County Clerk Norma Houk
and Deputies Janet Burdine, Tina Gibbs, Becky Smith, Sonya McGuire and Anita Moore

Closed December 24th - 27th and January 1st - 3rd

"Fatalities"

(Cont. from D3)

from 17,400 in 2001 to 17,419 in 2002. An estimated 258,000 persons were injured in crashes where police reported that alcohol was present - an average of one person injured approximately every 2 minutes.

Nine out of 10 Americans who participate in social events where alcohol is served feel that people should use designated drivers. The Kentucky State Police suggests that party hosts include alcohol-free beverages and protein-rich foods, along with reminding guest to plan ahead and remember the following advice:

Don't drink if - you plan to drive, don't drink.

Choose a sober designated driver before partying.

Take mass transit, a taxi or ask a friend to drive you home.

Spend the night where the activity is being held.

Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.

Always wear your safety belt - your best defense against an impaired driver.

Studies from the NHTSA show that the majority of Americans consider drunk driving one of the nation's most important social issues, ahead of healthcare, poverty/hunger, racism and education. Nearly 97 percent of Americans view drunk driving as a major threat to the community. As a result, the majority of Americans sup-

port increased use of enforcement efforts like saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints to protect innocent victims. Furthermore, two-thirds of Americans also strongly endorse the use of stricter and more severe penalties against drunk drivers.

Last year in Kentucky, there were over 8,000 alcohol/drug-related crashes resulting in nearly 5,800 injuries and 267 fatalities. During last year's 2-week mobilization period, there were 347 alcohol/drug-related collisions, resulting in 227 injuries and 18 deaths on Kentucky's roadways. Through the end of October 2003, we have recorded over 220 alcohol & drug related fatalities, putting us on track to match or surpass last year's total - not something to be proud of. Alcohol related fatalities alone, were up 22% last year over 2002, and nearly 1/3 of the 915 people killed on Kentucky roadways last year were involved in an alcohol/drug related crash.

The You Drink & Drive. You Lose. National Mobilization, launched in December 1999, is a comprehensive impaired driving prevention effort focused on highly visible criminal justice-related efforts to deter impaired driving and is designed for use by States and communities to save lives. Thanks to the tremendous efforts of thousands of devoted public and private partners, more than 150 million Americans have been reached through newspapers, the Internet, and from radio and television broadcasts. For more information about the campaign or fatalities in Kentucky, visit NHTSA's web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov or www.kentuckystatepolice.org.