Welcome to Warren County Visions!

Welcome to the Spring 2009 edition of County Visions, Warren County’s quarterly newsletter from the Family & Community Health Sciences department of Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Contact us at FCHS@co.warren.nj.us for questions or suggestions and be sure to visit us at our website for up to date class offerings at http://warren.njaes.rutgers.edu.

Wishing you and yours a healthy, happy spring!

Sherri Cirignano, MS, RD, LDN
FCHS Educator/Assistant Professor

Rutgers is working to make a difference in the lives of those suffering from hunger. Want to help?
Visit http://rah.rutgers.edu for more information.

A Tea Seminar: Drink to Your Health

**Back by Popular Demand**

› Lecture followed by Afternoon Tea
› Learn about the history, culture and health benefits of tea
› Enjoy tea tasting, recipes and more

June 4, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.
Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building
Route 519 ~ Belvidere, NJ
Fee: $5.00

Registration limited
Call 908-475-6504 to reserve your space!

---

What’s Inside?

▸ Got Grilling on Your Mind?
With warm weather on the horizon, thoughts of firing up the grill and eating outside can’t be far behind! For a yummy kebob recipe and some new information on keeping food safe while grilling, take a look at Grilling With Care, and share it with a friend.

▸ Cooking for One or Two?
More and more adults of all ages are cooking for only one or two people. We have put together some tips for Cooking Solo and a few suggestions for cookbooks that focus on going it solo in the kitchen.

▸ Ever Wonder What the Dates on Food Packages Mean?
“Sell-By”, “Use-By” and Can Codes. What do they all mean? A quick review of Dates on Food Products will provide you with the answers to these questions and give you a handy tool to keep on the fridge that tells you just how long products last once you get them home.

▸ Afternoon Tea Anyone?
Join us on Thursday June 4th to learn all about tea, including where the tradition of Afternoon Tea started. (Includes a seat at the tea table, of course!) Click here for more information.

---

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.
Grilling With Care

Use of the backyard grill or barbecue to prepare meals on hot summer evenings and for holiday picnics is as American as apple pie. Grilling not only helps to keep the heat out of the kitchen, but it is also a fun and tasty way to serve up favorites such as chicken, chops, and burgers. Grilling is also an opportunity for bacteria to form that can lead to food borne illness if food is not cooked properly. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are approximately 76 million cases of food borne illness overall each year. In addition to this, ongoing evidence suggests that cooking certain foods at high temperatures may result in other health risks. Following food safety guidelines carefully before, during, and after grilling to prevent food borne illness and limit health risks is an important part of grilling with care.

Before Grilling

Keeping all perishable foods that are headed for the grill cold until you are ready to prepare them is an important step in avoiding food borne illness. Here are some reminders:

- Transport cold food home in a cooler with ice packs
- Refrigerate within 2 hours when the outdoor temperature is below 90°F
- Refrigerate within 1 hour when the outdoor temperature is above 90°F
- Keep cold foods at 40°F or below until it is time to place them on the grill
- Defrost meat, fish, or poultry in the refrigerator on a plate to catch any drippings.

If you like to marinate your food before grilling to enrich its flavor or tenderize it, remember to:

- Always marinate food in the refrigerator
- Discard or boil any unused portion that has been used on a perishable item such as meat, fish, or poultry
- Boil the marinade or a portion of unused marinade to be used later on the cooked food.

Choosing what to put on the grill has taken on new importance according to top cancer prevention experts from the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) and the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR). A recent report from these organizations suggests that diets high in red meat including beef, pork, lamb, and processed meats such as hot dogs, may be linked to cancer of the colon. As a result of this report, recommendations include:

- Avoiding processed meats
- Limiting red meat to 18 ounces (cooked) each week.

Although these recommendations include some old grilling favorites, choosing more poultry, fish, and vegetables for the grill may lead to some new favorites. For example, try Vegetable Kebabs (recipe included on Page 2) served over brown rice for a delicious summer treat.

During Grilling

To continue grilling with care, be sure to cook meat, fish, and poultry to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. This cannot be done by looking at the food. Due to the high heat of the grill, foods often cook faster on the outside and may look done. To be sure it is done on the inside, use a food thermometer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USDA Recommended Safe Internal Temperatures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fish.................................................................................................................... 145°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steaks &amp; Roasts............................................................................................ 145°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Beef................................................................................................... 160°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork.................................................................................................................... 160°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry.............................................................................................................. 165°F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The high heat of the grill is also responsible for flare-ups that can cause the outside of food to become charred. Some studies suggest that there may be a cancer risk when protein foods such as meats, poultry, or fish are cooked at high temperatures.
Researchers know that certain cancer-causing substances are formed during grilling and other high-heat cooking methods. Some of these substances are produced in “muscle meats” such as red meat, poultry, game, and fish during the high-heat cooking process. Others are formed when the fat drips onto the hot stones or coals of the grill, accumulating onto the food when smoke and flare-ups occur.

As a result, experts recommend that we:
- Eat moderate amounts of grilled protein foods
- Avoid charring of grilled protein foods
- Partially cooking food in the microwave in the oven, or on the stove will help to reduce grilling time and decrease the opportunity for charring. This method can be used safely if the food is taken from the precooking source and placed directly on the grill to complete cooking. All perishable foods should be cooked thoroughly without interruption to avoid development of harmful bacteria. Additional suggestions to keep grilling safe are found in the box Tips for Grilling with Care.

After Grilling

Once food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature and is removed from the grill:
- Keep food hot at 140°F or above until it is served
- Place on a clean platter, being sure to not place it on the plate that held the raw meat, poultry, or fish.
- Refrigerate cooked items within 2 hours in mild weather
- Refrigerate cooked items within 1 hour when the outside temperature is at 90°F or above.

Try this AICR Health–e-Recipe that shows how grilling vegetables is a great way to grill safely and increase vegetable intake at the same time:

**Vegetable Kebabs**

- 1 small eggplant, cut in half lengthwise, then into thick chunks (peeled if desired)
- 1 small red onion, sliced and cut into 8 wedges
- 1 zucchini, cut in half lengthwise, then into thick chunks
- 1 yellow summer squash, cut in half lengthwise, then into thick chunks
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into eighths
- 2 Tbsp. balsamic or red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1/4 cup plus 1 Tbsp. minced fresh basil (or 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. dried), divided
- 1/4 cup non-fat plain yogurt
- 2 Tbsp. non-fat mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice

Thread 8 skewers, 2 skewers of each vegetable, keeping each vegetable on separate skewers. Place the vegetables in a shallow pan large enough to hold the skewers.

Make the marinade by whisking together in a small bowl the vinegar, oil, and 1/4 cup of fresh basil (or 1 tablespoon dried). Pour the marinade over the vegetables. Let them stand for 10 minutes, occasionally turning the skewers so the marinade coats all sides.

Meanwhile, make the dressing: Place the yogurt, mayonnaise, the remaining 1 tablespoon of fresh basil (or 1 teaspoon dried) and lemon juice in a blender and mix at low speed until it is smooth.

Grill the vegetables starting with the eggplant. About five minutes later, add the onions, and then about five minutes after that, add the rest of the vegetables (adjusting height of rack to avoid charring). Grill to your liking and serve with the dressing drizzled over top.

Makes 8 servings of ½ cup each.

Per serving: 97 calories, 7 g. total fat (less than 1 g. saturated fat), 8 g. carbohydrate, 2 g. protein, 1 g. dietary fiber, 39 mg. sodium. Health-e-recipes. AICR.org.

Don’t have a grill? These kebabs can also be cooked under the oven broiler.

Check these sites for more information:

- www.aicr.org
- ww.cdc.gov
- www.fsis.usda.gov

**Sources**


www.aicr.org
www.fsis.usda.gov

**Photo Credits**

istockphoto.com

---

**Tips for Grilling with Care**

- Grill more vegetables and fruits
- Choose poultry and fish over beef, pork, and lamb
- Marinate protein foods before grilling and then turn them frequently to reduce the production of cancer-causing substances
- Reduce flare-ups by spreading aluminum foil on the grill, making small holes in the foil to allow fat to drain
- Pre-cook protein foods before grilling to shorten the grilling time
- Choose lean cuts to decrease fat drippings on the coals
- Cook in the center of the grill and move coals to the side to keep fat from dripping on them
- Grill smaller portions to decrease the exposure time to high heat
- Remove and discard any charred portions on protein foods
- “Barbecue” in the oven anytime of the year by spreading your favorite sauce on chicken breasts or lean chops and bake until done.

For a comprehensive list of our publications visit www.njoes.rutgers.edu. November 2008

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
88 Lipman Drive, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8525
Phone: 732.932.5000
Cooking Solo

Tips for cooking for one or two people

- **Shop with convenience in mind.** Buy foods that are individually frozen, such as fruits, vegetables, chicken breasts or fish fillets.

- **Use your freezer wisely.** Most foods freeze well, including breads, meats, fruits, vegetables and whole grains. For best quality, freeze food while it’s fresh.

- **Cook meals in advance and freeze single-size portions.** Be sure to write the date and contents on each package.

- **Prepare one-dish meals.** Choose a dish that serves as the meal. Healthy examples include beef, barley and vegetable stew; chicken, vegetable and rice casserole; turkey and bean casserole; or vegetarian chili with diced vegetables.

- **Invite others to eat with you.** Invite friends or relatives to join you for a meal

Additional information can be found on mayoclinic.com.

Cookbooks for One or Two People

- **Cooking for One** by Valerie Ferguson

- **Going Solo in the Kitchen** by Jane Doerfer

- **Solo Suppers: Simple Delicious Meals to Cook for Yourself** by Joyce Goldstein

- **Cooking for 1 or 2 (A Nitty Gritty Cookbook)** by Katherine Greenberg

- **Serves One: Simple Meals to Savor When You’re on Your Own** by Toni Lydecker

- **Cooking for Two (Better Homes & Gardens)** by Jan Miller

- **Betty Crocker’s Cooking for Two** by Betty Crocker

Rutgers
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
DATES ON FOOD PRODUCTS

Dates on food products are primarily used to help a store determine how long a food is displayed for sale. These dates are usually found on perishable food items such as meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products. The following are some tips for using these dates:

**Types of Dates:**

- If a product has a **“Sell-By”** date, you should buy it before the date expires.

- If a product has a **“Best if Used By (or Before)”** date, it is referring to flavor and quality and is not a purchase by or safety date.

- If a product has a **“Use-By”** date, it is referring to the last date recommended for use of the product at its peak quality.

- Dates on egg cartons refer to the last day the store may sell the eggs as fresh.

**What are Can Codes?**

- Cans are required to have packing codes for tracking purposes only and are not meant to be “use-by” dates for consumers.

**Tips for Food Storage:**

- Purchase products before the date expires.

- Refrigerate or freeze perishable food promptly after purchase.

- Follow handling recommendations on food products.

- If an egg carton has a date on it, and the date has not passed when the eggs are purchased, they should be safe to use for three to five weeks from the date of purchase.

- Store cans with high-acid foods such as tomatoes and pineapple for 12 to 18 months and low-acid canned foods such as fish and vegetables for 2 to 5 years.

Refrigerator Home Storage (at 40° F or below) of Fresh or Uncooked Products - (Source: www.fsis.usda.gov)

If a product has a “Use-By Date,” follow that date.
If a product has a “Sell-By Date” or no date, cook or freeze the product by the times on the following chart:

### Storage of Fresh or Uncooked Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Storage Times After Purchase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>1 or 2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef, Veal, Pork and Lamb</td>
<td>3 to 5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Meat and Ground Poultry</td>
<td>1 or 2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Variety Meats (Liver, Tongue, Brain, Kidneys, Heart, Chitterlings)</td>
<td>1 or 2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cured Ham, Cook-Before-Eating</td>
<td>5 to 7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sausage from Pork, Beef or Turkey, Uncooked</td>
<td>1 or 2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>3 to 5 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Refrigerator Home Storage (at 40° F or Below) of Processed Products Sealed at Plant

If a product has a “Use-by Date,” follow that date.
If a product has a “Sell-By Date” or no date, cook or freeze the product by the times on the following chart:

### Storage of Processed Products Sealed at Plant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processed Product</th>
<th>Unopened, After Purchase</th>
<th>After Opening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooked Poultry</td>
<td>3 to 4 days</td>
<td>3 to 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked Sausage</td>
<td>3 to 4 days</td>
<td>3 to 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sausage, Hard/Dry, shelf-stable</td>
<td>6 weeks/pantry</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corned Beef, uncooked, in pouch with pickling juices</td>
<td>5 to 7 days</td>
<td>3 to 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum-packed Dinners, Commercial Brand with USDA seal</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>3 to 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacon</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot dogs</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luncheon meat</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>3 to 5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham, fully cooked</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>Slices, 3 days; whole, 7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham, canned, labeled “keep refrigerated”</td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>3 to 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham, canned, shelf stable</td>
<td>2 years/pantry</td>
<td>3 to 5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned Meat and Poultry, shelf stable</td>
<td>2 to 5 years/pantry</td>
<td>3 to 4 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Tea Seminar: Drink To Your Health

**Back by Popular Demand**

- Lecture followed by Afternoon Tea
- Learn about the history, culture and health benefits of tea
- Enjoy tea tasting, recipes and more

June 4, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.

Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building
Route 519 ~ Belvidere, NJ
Fee: $5.00

Registration limited
Call 908-475-6504 to reserve your space!