

PENNY SAVER NEWS

July 4, 2013

BY: Mary A. Keith, Ph.D., L.D.
Food, Nutrition and Health Agent

e-mail: mkeith@ufl.edu

Happy 4th of July!

Celebrate with your family! It's the 4th of July! Have a barbeque, throw the burgers on the grill (just don't overdo them!), sit back and watch the fireworks tonight. Just be careful and declare your independence from food poisoning too. Keep an eye on the table and the clock, so your family doesn't become a statistic at the ER next week. Here are some of the big points to remember.

An important number to remember is 1 hour. Anytime the air temperature is over 90° F, one hour is as long as we can safely leave food at room temperature. That includes any uncooked meats, poultry or fish of course. We do usually think about those foods.

But it also includes all the sliced tomatoes, cut fruits and fruit salads that we don't usually consider dangerous. Once fruit has been cut the sweet juice is open and exposed for any bacteria that happen to be in the vicinity. They'll chow down, and make many more bacteria. So the slices of tomato, watermelon, cantaloupe, peaches or strawberries all need to be kept refrigerated. Just put out a few slices or servings at a time, and refill the plate or bowl as needed. If you're off at the beach, keep them all on ice in the cooler. Or nestle the bowl of cut fruit down into the ice in one cooler, open for easy picking, while the rest of the fruit and ice are safely stored in a closed cooler. If they're not iced down for more than one hour, they need to go in the garbage!

As for those meats that are headed for the grill, keep them refrigerated even while they're marinating. Most marinade has some salt and acid, but it's not enough to keep the meat safe. If you want the same marinade for a sauce on the finished meat, set half aside before you add the meat to it. Keep it cold, then heat to serve.

When the grill is ready, add that nice juicy meat. Then take the dirty plate into the kitchen and stick it in the sink or dishwasher. Don't even let it tempt you to use it again! The juices on the plate will pass bacteria onto the tongs, fork, or anything else they touch. Get them out of the way, quickly.

Take a clean plate to the grill for the cooked meats or vegetables. Use a meat thermometer to be sure the food is safe but not overcooked. Burgers must get to 160° F in the thickest part. If you're

grilling a pork loin or other large cut of meat, it needs to reach 145° F in the center, and to sit and 'rest' for 3 minutes before you slice and serve it. It doesn't matter if the meat is pink inside or not. If the temperature's right, you're okay. Chicken parts need to reach 165° F. A deep-fried turkey needs the same. If you're grilling vegetables, they only need to get to 140° F.

Use a digital thermometer to get the best read in the shortest amount of time. With a digital only the tip of the probe or pin needs to be in the middle of the meat. If you have a dial thermometer then 2 inches of the pin has to be inside the meat to be accurate. That can be tricky with a burger that's only half an inch thick!

Once the burgers or steaks come off the grill, the one hour clock starts again. Any cooked meats or veggies that haven't been eaten in one hour need to be refrigerated, on ice, or in the garbage. You can reheat a cold burger much more easily than you can recover from food poisoning after eating a room-temperature burger!

Remember, not all food poisoning hits the day after the party. Some kinds of bacteria won't show their effects until days or even weeks after you ate them. It can depend on how much you eat, your body size and your overall health. Small children, the elderly and other high-risk people may get sick even if the healthy young adults do not. So be careful and be happy, today and next week.

This is a fruity cool dessert for a hot summer day. Use whatever mixture of fruits your family enjoys. If you want pineapple or papaya you'll have to use canned fruit. Those fresh fruits will soften the gelatin. Have a safe and happy Fourth!

Fresh Berry Terrine

2 cups light white cranberry juice

2 envelopes unflavored gelatin

2 cups each of 3 fruits (strawberries, blueberries, bananas for the 4th)

Wash the fruit and slice or quarter larger fruits. Pour half a cup of juice into medium bowl. Sprinkle the gelatin over the juice and let it sit for 5 minutes. Put another half cup of juice in small saucepan and heat to boiling. Pour into bowl with gelatin and stir until the gelatin is dissolved. Stir in the rest of the juice. Layer the fruits in an 8 x 4 inch loaf pan. Carefully pour the juice over the fruit. Refrigerate until set, or overnight. To serve, run a thin knife around the sides of the pan, then put a plate on top. Hold the pan and plate together and flip them over. Shake a bit if necessary until the terrine slides onto the plate. Use a serrated knife to cut into slices. Serve with whipped topping, yogurt or ice cream. Serves 8.

Hillsborough County Extension is a cooperative service of Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners and the University of Florida.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Employment Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. 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.