

Balanced Living - September 2014

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A Recipe for Food Safety



A few hours after lunch, your stomach is churning and you're flushed. But surely it couldn't be food poisoning. After all, you know better than to eat a rare hamburger. You had a light salad of vegetables and sprouts.

Sadly, almost no food is immune from contamination. Though most foodborne illness stems from raw animal foods -- such as eggs, meats and dairy products -- fruits and vegetables may carry germs, too. Alfalfa and clover sprouts were tied to almost 23,000 cases of gastrointestinal illness and two deaths in the 1990s, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Foodborne diseases can be caused by bacteria, viruses and parasites.

Each year, foodborne disease hospitalizes 325,000 people and kills up to 5,000. As warm weather arrives, it's vital to protect yourself. You'll probably eat more raw fruits and vegetables, enjoy picnics and barbecues -- and store or transport food under less than perfect conditions.

Be careful with produce

Treat them with care, just as you would with animal-based foods. Fruits and vegetables often come from nations without rigid safety standards. "Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly," says Tom Chiller, M.D., a CDC epidemic intelligence service officer. Don't skip fruits with inedible rinds. Bacteria on rinds can spread to the flesh during slicing.

Handle susceptible foods carefully

"Bacteria need moisture content, protein and carbohydrates to grow," says Susan Conley, director of food safety education for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Potato salad and macaroni salad offer ideal conditions, she says. Keep those dishes well chilled. Never let a starchy salad touch raw meat or utensils used on raw meats.

Contain bacteria

Prevent bacteria from spreading from raw to cooked meats. If you carry a platter of burgers to the grill, use a second clean plate to take the meat from the grill.

Keep foods cold

Refrigeration doesn't kill bacteria; it stops or slows them from growing. Food can still go bad in the fridge -- meats from bacteria; fruits, vegetables and breads from molds. The bacterium *Listeria* is an exception in that it grows well in the cold.

Understand "sell-by" and "use-by" dates

"Sell by" applies to stores, which can keep things colder in the back room before display than you do in your refrigerator. Even if the sell-by date on raw poultry is a week away, you've only got two or three days to use it once you bring it home, Ms. Conley says. The "use-by" date refers to an unopened package.

Keep food preparation areas clean

Wipe your sink with diluted bleach once a week. Avoid using sponges; change your dishcloth at least once daily.

Four key ingredients

Clean. Wash your hands with soap and water. Discard outer lettuce and cabbage leaves. Wash fruits and vegetables.

Chill. Refrigerate leftovers promptly. When you arrive home from the grocery store, put refrigerated items away first. Don't let milk sit out during a meal; pour what you or your family needs and put the container back in the fridge.

Cook. Heat hamburgers to 160 degrees on a meat thermometer. Cook egg yolks until firm.

Separate. Don't let raw foods such as vegetables touch raw meats.

Major threats

Botulism (*Clostridium botulinum*)

- Symptoms: nausea, vomiting, fatigue, headache, dizziness, double vision, descending paralysis and difficulty breathing.
- Prevention: Don't use food in cracked jars or cans that are swollen, leaking or damaged or that have bulging ends. Don't give honey or foods that contain honey to children under age 1.

Clostridium (*Clostridium species -- not botulinum*)

- Symptoms: primary symptoms are diarrhea and cramping 8-24 hours after eating spoiled food. Other symptoms may include nausea and fever. Vomiting may occur occasionally. Self-limiting and usually resolves in a day.
- Prevention: Thought to develop mostly in meats and meat products that have been warmed too long or rewarmed. Prepare food fresh and eat it soon after preparation.

C. jejuni (*Campylobacter jejuni*)

- Symptoms: muscle pain, headache and fever followed by diarrhea, abdominal pain and nausea.
- Prevention: Avoid raw or undercooked poultry, unpasteurized milk and untreated water. Cook ground meats thoroughly.

E. coli (*Escherichia coli*)

- Symptoms: abdominal cramps, stomach pain and watery or bloody diarrhea. Severe cases can be fatal.
- Prevention: Eat only thoroughly cooked meat and poultry. Wash produce, especially lettuce, thoroughly. Avoid unpasteurized milk and apple cider.

Listeria (*Listeria monocytogenes*)

- Symptoms: nausea, vomiting, cramps, diarrhea, headache and fever. Can be fatal in the young and elderly.
- Prevention: Wash raw vegetables thoroughly, especially lettuce and cabbage leaves. Cook meat and poultry thoroughly and avoid unpasteurized dairy foods. Carefully observe "sell by" and "use by" dates on processed foods.

Salmonella (*Salmonella species*)

- Symptoms: nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, headache, diarrhea and fever.
- Prevention: Thoroughly cook meat, poultry, fish and eggs. Don't eat raw eggs in salad dressing and baking dough. Use separate cutting surfaces and knives to prepare raw and cooked foods. Never eat unpasteurized, raw or undercooked foods of animal origin.

Staphylococcus aureus (Staphylococcus aureus)

- Symptoms: nausea, vomiting, chills and shallow breathing.
- Prevention: Don't keep prepared foods -- particularly cooked and cured meats and cheese and meat salads -- sitting at room temperature for more than two hours. Store meat, fish and poultry in the coldest part of the refrigerator.

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10 Good Reasons to Try Yoga



Some yoga styles are intense and vigorous, and others are relaxing and meditative. Regardless of which type you choose, yoga is an excellent way to stretch and strengthen your body, focus your mind and relax your spirit.

“There are many branches of yoga, a 5,000-year-old discipline from India developed as a practice to unite the mind and body,” says Mara Carrico, author of *Yoga Journal’s Yoga Basics* and a spokeswoman for the American Council on Exercise in San Diego. “All hatha yoga styles can help balance your body, mind and spirit, but they achieve it in various ways.”

For example, the different styles of physical or hatha yoga differ in how poses or asanas are done and whether they focus more on mastering and holding the posture, strict alignment, breathing or the flow of movement.

“But no style is better than another; it’s a matter of personal preference,” says Ms. Carrico. “I suggest finding a style that furthers your goals and looking for a teacher and class you feel comfortable with.” If you’ve never done yoga, here are 10 good reasons to give it a try.

More flexible

1. Increased flexibility and reduced risk for injury. Each yoga pose targets specific muscles, thereby increasing flexibility and reducing the risk for injury in your activities.

“If you’re just getting started in yoga, be sure your teacher knows about any injuries or health conditions you have and is aware and knowledgeable enough to advise you of any positions you should avoid,” says Ms. Carrico.

2. Less stress. Yoga can help soothe the mind and lower stress levels by focusing the mind on the moment and the movements rather than on external distractions.

3. Increased awareness and concentration. A primary component of yoga is rhythmic, focused breathing.

“Taking full, complete breaths makes it easier to relax and center the mind,” says Ms. Carrico.

4. Better understanding of the mind-body connection. Yoga requires you to focus all your energies on performing each movement or pose precisely. This benefits both the mind and body and teaches you to integrate the two.

5. Greater strength and stamina. More vigorous styles of yoga, such as Vinyasa and Ashtanga, promote strength and stamina as well as flexibility and relaxation.

Muscles in balance

6. Fewer muscle imbalances. Those who are new to yoga may begin to notice muscle and flexibility imbalances they hadn’t been aware of.

“Many women carry one shoulder higher than the other without being aware of it,” says Ms. Carrico. “Yoga poses can help correct these and other imbalances over time.”

7. Better balance and stability. Balancing poses require you to engage your core stabilizer muscles, which can help improve overall stability.

“This is helpful for anyone, but it’s of great benefit to older people or people with injuries or disabilities that affect their balance,” says Ms. Carrico.

8. Improved posture. Yoga poses strengthen and open tight areas of the body, such as the shoulders and muscles of the upper back, which is necessary for good posture.

9. Greater body awareness. Yoga requires you to contract and/or relax specific muscles as you stretch into each pose, thereby increasing awareness of the body’s strengths and weaknesses.

10. Cross-training benefits. Yoga combines flexibility, strength training and balance to create a mind-body activity that’s a perfect addition to any fitness regimen.

Even people who participate in different kinds of sports or physical activities find doing yoga on a daily basis provides a range of physical and mental benefits unavailable anyplace else,” says Ms. Carrico.

“Once you have learned a few yoga moves and breathing techniques, you can easily integrate them into your regular fitness routine.”

Krames Staywell

Understanding Alzheimer's Disease



Alzheimer's is a disease that causes changes in areas of the brain that control memory and reasoning. Why the disease develops is not yet fully understood. At present, it has no cure. But proper care can help most people with Alzheimer's live a comfortable life for many years.

How the Brain Works

The brain controls all the workings of the body and mind. Different areas of the brain control different functions. Certain areas control physical tasks such as walking. Other areas control language skills. Still others control mental tasks such as remembering, concentrating, and decision-making.

Changes in the Brain

In people with Alzheimer's, microscopic structures, called **plaques** and **tangles**, start to form. Brain cells then begin to die. The areas of the brain affected by these changes are the ones that control mental functions such as memory. Other functions, such as movement, are generally not affected until very late in the illness. That's why people with Alzheimer's disease look normal, but cannot form new memories no matter how hard they try.

Who Gets Alzheimer's?

Alzheimer's disease tends to affect people over 65. The older you are, the more likely you are to develop the disease. But people as young as 40 can be affected. All types of people get Alzheimer's. No profession, education level, or race is immune. In some cases, Alzheimer's runs in the family. In other cases, no other family members are affected.

The Effects of Alzheimer's Disease

Symptoms of the disease appear slowly. The average length of time from the first through the last stage is about 9 years. This time can vary widely.

- **In the early stage**, the person seems confused and forgetful. Recent events and conversations are often forgotten. The person may lose important items. However, the distant past may be remembered clearly.

- **In the middle stage**, more help is needed with daily tasks. The person may not know family members, may get lost in familiar places, and may forget how to do simple tasks. He or she may be restless, moody, and unpredictable.
- **In the late stage**, memory, judgment, and reason may be lost completely. Help with every aspect of daily life is generally needed.

Treating Alzheimer's Disease

The goals of treatment are to manage symptoms and keep your loved one comfortable.

- **Medications** may improve symptoms in some cases. The doctor can determine which medications may help your loved one.
- **A management plan** that includes care and supervision is essential.
- **Regular doctor visits** help keep track of your loved one's condition.

Krames Staywell