

November/December 2010

Handling Left-overs Safely

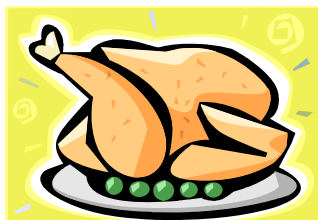
Do you ever have leftovers at your house? Many families do. What do you do with your leftovers? At our house, they become another meal or snack. When they have to be thrown away because they haven't been handled correctly, then its money thrown away. With the upcoming holidays, you may well have a few leftovers from family meals. Here are a few tips to make sure that your leftovers are safe to eat:

- * **When** serving foods, keep hot foods hot (140 degrees F or above) and cold foods cold (40 degrees F or below). Bacteria grows rapidly between 40 degrees and 140 degrees. Throw away all perishable foods such as meat, poultry, eggs and casseroles that have been left at room temperature over two hours.
- * **Large** amounts of food need to be divided into smaller containers and refrigerated to cool. A large pot of soup, beans or stew will take a long time to cool so divide it into smaller portions in shallow containers and refrigerate. Whole roasts, hams and turkeys should be sliced or cut into smaller pieces before storing them in the refrigerator or freezer. Turkey wings, legs and thighs may be left whole. All leftovers should be wrapped or covered before refrigerating or freezing.
- * **Reheat** leftovers containing meat or poultry to an internal temperature of at



least 165 degrees F. Be sure to use a food thermometer to make sure the food is hot enough. Re-heat sauces, soups and gravies by bringing them to a rolling boil.

- * **When** reheating food in the microwave, be sure to cover and rotate the food for even heating. Arrange food evenly in a covered microwave safe glass or ceramic dish and add some liquid if needed. Cover with a microwave safe lid or plastic wrap and loosen or vent the lid or wrap to let steam escape. The moist heat that's created will help destroy harmful bacteria and help the food to be heated evenly.
- * **Always** allow standing time when reheating food. That's the two or three minutes after heating and before eating. During these few minutes, the food continues to cook and the temperature can increase several degrees.
- * **Use** cooked leftovers within 3-4 days. If you cannot eat all of the leftovers by that time, it is safe to freeze meat and poultry leftovers for 3 to 6 months.



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Ask Johanna

Question: My family leaves food sitting out after Thanksgiving lunch all afternoon and into the evening. Is this safe?

Answer: That happens in a lot of families. Remember that bacteria grows very quickly at room temperature. Certain types of people such as pregnant women, older adults, young children and persons with a weakened immune system have a greater chance of getting sick from food poisoning. If food is left out without being in a crock pot for hot foods or in bowls placed in ice for cold foods, you may want to avoid snacking after lunch since bacteria grow very rapidly and can make people sick after a few hours.

Pumpkin Pie and Other Good Stuff

Question: When I make pumpkin pies, I cover them after they have cooled and leave them on the counter. Should I refrigerate them?

Answer: Yes. Food made with eggs and milk such as pumpkin pie, custard pie and cheesecake, must first be safely baked to a safe internal temperature of 160 degrees F. Then they must be refrigerated after baking. Eggs and milk have high protein and moisture contents. When these baked products are left at room temperature, bacteria can start to grow. It's not necessary to refrigerate most other cakes, cookies or breads unless they have a perishable filling or frosting such as cream cheese.

Question: Can I roast my turkey the day before Thanksgiving and put it in the refrigerator whole?

Answer: It is not recommended to refrigerate a cooked turkey whole since it could take too long to cool down to a safe temperature. To be on the safe side, cut whole or large pieces of poultry into small pieces. Drumsticks, thighs and wings can be left whole if desired. Refrigerate in covered, shallow containers within 2 hours of cooking. This is **very** important to make sure that rapid, even cooling and quick reheating.



Upcoming Events:

- ◇ Wednesday, November 17: "Food Safety and You" program at Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC), 11:00 a.m.
- ◇ Thursday, November 25: Happy Thanksgiving!
- ◇ Tuesday, November 30: "Diabetes Questions Answered". 6:00 p.m., SSISD Board Room
- ◇ Wednesday, December 8: "Holiday Snacks for Kids" program at ECLC, 11:00 a.m.
- ◇ Saturday, December 11: Basic sewing class—contact the Extension office to sign up, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- ◇ Saturday, December 25: Merry Christmas!!

Healthy Choices

Mashed Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients:

- 4 medium sweet potatoes with skin
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 1/4 cup fat-free or low-fat milk
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Directions:

Fill a large sauce pan with water and bring to a boil. Wash and cut sweet potatoes into small cubes. Put potatoes in boiling water and cook until potatoes are soft (about 15-25 minutes). Remove potatoes and place in a bowl. Mash potatoes with potato masher or fork. Add margarine, milk, brown sugar and cinnamon. Mix well. Serve immediately. Refrigerate leftovers. Serves 8.

Per serving: 100 calories, 1.5 grams fat, 40 mg. sodium, 21 grams carbohydrates.



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