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Safe Food Handling

Your Thanksgiving preparations should be in full swing by now! The turkey is thawing, the pies have been baked, and your refrigerator is probably overflowing with everything you need to complete your holiday feast! Now you need to start thinking about the special steps that are necessary to ensure food safety for your holiday entertaining.

According to Peggy Van Laanen, Professor and Extension Nutrition Specialist at Texas A&M University, the thing you should be most concerned about is the temperature of meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, dressing, gravy, cream pies, pudding, and dishes made with these foods. Dips or sauces made with dairy products are also hazardous if held for long periods at room temperature.

When serving your holiday dishes keep the following points in mind:

Keep hot foods hot. Chafing dishes may or may not keep foods at the necessary temperature (140 degrees F or above). Never leave hot foods out for more than 2 hours.

Put small quantities of food on the table. Replace them often from the heat source in the kitchen or from the refrigerator.

Keep all perishable foods refrigerated until serving.

Leftovers from a buffet should be discarded.

Make your holiday food events special and safe by following the 4 C's guidelines:

Keep everything CLEAN during food handling.

Keep foods CHILLED.

COOK foods thoroughly.

Avoid CROSS-CONTAMINATION B the movement of bacteria from raw protein foods to cooked foods, or those to be eaten fresh.

By following these simple steps you will ensure the success of your party.

This week I am including a recipe from "The New Family Cookbook for People With Diabetes." Enjoy!

Bread Pudding With Raisins

3 slices day-old white bread, cubed

½ cup raisins

2 cups fat-free milk

2 large eggs, slightly beaten, or ½ cup egg substitute

2 tablespoons sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Prepare a 1 1/2-quart baking dish with nonstick pan spray. Mix the bread cubes and raisins in the prepared dish. Combine the remaining ingredients in a medium bowl; pour the mixture over the bread and raisins; stir to blend. Set the filled baking dish in a shallow pan on the middle rack of the oven. Pour hot water into the shallow pan to a depth of 1 inch around the baking dish. This creates a water bath to cook the pudding slowly. Bake 45 to 55 minutes, or until a knife inserted in the pudding comes out clean. Remove the pan from the water bath and serve warm or chilled.

Serving Size: ½ cup, **Calories:** 139, **Total Fat:** 2 gm., **Cholesterol** 72 mg., **Total Carbohydrates** 24 gm., **Protein:** 6 gm. **Exchange List Approximations:** Other Carbohydrates 1 ½, Fat ½

For more information on this topic, please feel free to contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service office at 903/473-5000, ext. 157.

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