

Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3



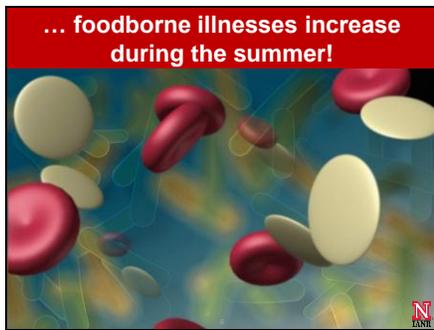
Slide 4



Slide 5



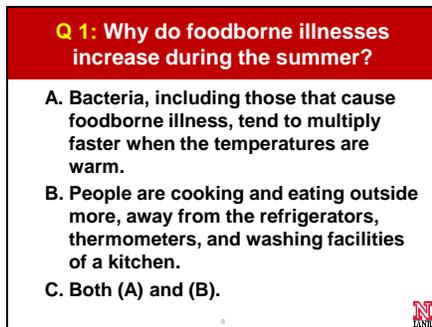
Slide 6



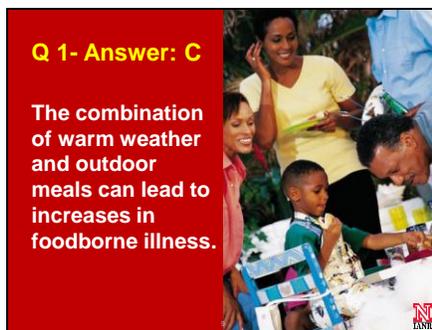
Slide 7



Slide 8



Slide 9



Foodborne illness peaks in the summer – why?

Yes, foodborne illnesses do increase during the summer, and the answer appears to be twofold. First, there are the natural causes. Bacteria are present throughout the environment in soil, air, water, and in the bodies of people and animals. These microorganisms grow faster in the warm summer months. Most foodborne bacteria grow fastest at temperatures from 90 to 110 °F. Bacteria also need moisture to flourish, and summer weather is often hot and humid.

Given the right circumstances, harmful bacteria can quickly multiply on food to large numbers. When this happens, someone eating the food can get sick.

Second, outside activities increase. More people are cooking outside at picnics, barbecues, and on camping trips. The safety controls that a kitchen provides — thermostat-controlled cooking, refrigeration, and washing facilities — are usually not available.

Source and for more information:

FSIS/USDA, Foodborne Illness Peaks in Summer – Why?

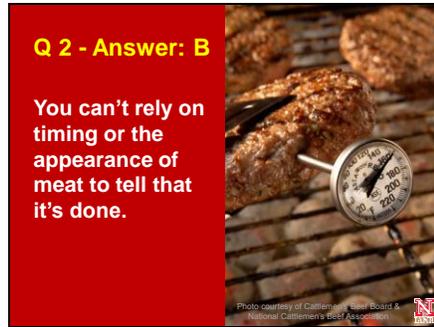
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/foodborne_illness_peaks_in_summer/index.asp (retrieved June 17, 2011)

Slide 10

Q 2: You're having a cookout in the backyard, and the hamburgers are ready for the grill. How can you tell if the burgers are done and safe to eat?

- A. They have been cooked for at least 4 minutes on each side.**
- B. A thermometer inserted in the middle of the patties registers at least 160 °F.**
- C. They are brown in the middle and no pink is showing.**





Why does USDA recommend using a food thermometer?

Because you can't tell if food has reached a safe internal temperature just by looking at it.

Is it done yet? How do you know when your hamburger is done? Because it's brown in the middle? Looking at the color of the food is not enough—you have to use a food thermometer to be sure.

According to USDA research, 1 out of every 4 hamburgers turns brown in the middle before it has reached a safe internal temperature. The only way to be sure food is safely cooked is to use a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature.

Because it helps you to avoid overcooking.

Using a food thermometer not only keeps you safe from harmful food bacteria but it also helps you to avoid overcooking, keeping it juicy and flavorful.

Source and for more information:
FSIS/USDA, Why Does USDA Recommend Using a Food Thermometer?
<http://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/thermometer.html> (retrieved June 11, 2011)

Slide 12

Q 3: The burgers are done, and you're ready to take them off the grill. Is it safe to put the cooked burgers back on the plate that held the raw meat?

A. Yes, as long as you wipe off the plate with a paper towel.

B. Yes, because the burgers are thoroughly cooked.

C. No, because any bacteria in the raw meat or juices could contaminate the cooked burgers.



Slide 13

Q 3 - Answer: C

Be smart. Keep foods apart. Don't cross-contaminate.



Cross-contamination is the transfer of harmful bacteria to food from other foods, cutting boards, utensils, etc., if they are not handled properly. This is especially true when handling raw meat, poultry, and seafood, so keep these foods and their juices away from already cooked or ready-to-eat foods and fresh produce.

Source and for more information:
FSIS/USDA, Be Smart. Keep Foods Apart. Don't Cross-Contaminate.
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Be_Smart_Keep_Foods_Apart/index.asp (retrieved June 17, 2011)

Slide 14

Q 4: It's 3:00 p.m. and you just finished making fresh salsa for a party that begins at 6:00 p.m. Is it safe to leave the salsa out on the counter for 3 hours, until the party begins?

A. Yes, because the acid in the tomatoes will keep harmful bacteria from growing.

B. No, because bacteria grows rapidly in food at room temperature.

C. No, because your family might eat it all before the party starts.



Slide 15

Q 4 - Answer: B

Never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator for more than two hours (or one hour if the temperature is over 90 °F).



To keep guacamole and salsa safe:

- Before and after preparing food, wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap.
- Wash the ingredients thoroughly under running water. That includes ingredients that you plan to peel, such as avocados.
- Make sure that knives, cutting boards, containers, and other kitchen surfaces are clean.
- Keep the salsa or guacamole refrigerated until you serve it. Do not leave it out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours. If the temperature is above 90 degrees, do not leave it out for more than 1 hour.

Source and for more information:

Magdalena Kendall, Salsa and Guacamole: Are They Safe?

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/salsa.html> (retrieved June 17, 2011)

Slide 16

Q 5: You want to make some homemade ice cream, and the recipe calls for eggs. You've heard that raw eggs may be contaminated with *Salmonella*. What should you do?

A. Use an egg substitute product or pasteurized eggs instead of raw eggs.

B. Cook and chill the milk before adding the eggs.

C. Don't worry about it. It's never made you sick in the past, has it?



Slide 17

Q 5 - Answer: A

However, even if you're using pasteurized eggs or egg substitutes for your ice cream, both the FDA and the USDA recommend starting with a cooked egg base for optimal safety.



Eggs are a standard ingredient in most homemade ice cream recipes. They add flavor and color, prevent ice crystallization, and make for that smooth and creamy texture. To prevent this ingredient from causing harmful infections, just follow these guidelines for safe cooking and handling.

Cooking the Egg Base

The FDA advises consumers to start with a cooked egg base for ice cream. This is especially important if you're serving people at high risk for foodborne infections: infants, older adults, pregnant women, and those with weakened immune systems. To make a cooked egg base (also known as a custard base):

- Combine eggs and milk as indicated in the recipe. (Other ingredients, such as sugar, may be added at this step.)
- Cook the mixture gently to an internal temperature of 160 °F, stirring constantly. The cooking will destroy *Salmonella*, if present. Use

a food thermometer to check the temperature of the mixture. At this temperature, the mixture will firmly coat a metal spoon (but please don't lick the spoon if the custard is not fully cooked!).

- After cooking, chill the mixture before adding other ingredients and freezing.

Other Options

You can also use egg substitute products or pasteurized eggs in your ice cream, or you can find a recipe without eggs.

- With the **egg substitute products**, you might have to experiment a bit with the recipe to figure out the right amount to add for the best flavor.
- **Pasteurized eggs** can be substituted in recipes that call for uncooked eggs. Commercial pasteurization of eggs is a heat process at low temperatures that destroys any *Salmonella* that might be present, without having a noticeable effect on flavor or nutritional content. These are available at some supermarkets for a slightly higher cost per dozen. Even if you're using pasteurized eggs for your ice cream, both the FDA and the USDA recommend starting with a cooked egg base for optimal safety.

Source and for more information:

Nancy Bufano, Food Technologist,
Center for Food Safety and Applied
Nutrition, FDA ,

Slide 20

Q 7: Unwashed hands are a prime cause of foodborne illness. How many seconds are recommended for hand washing?

- A. 10 seconds
- B. 15 seconds
- C. 20 seconds
- D. 25 seconds

20



Slide 21

Q 7 - Answer: C

Whenever possible, wash your hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds before handling food.



Photo courtesy of FSIS/USDA Image Library



For more information: Check this link on handwashing from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
<http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>
(retrieved June 21, 2011)

Slide 22

Q 8: Since only the inside of melons (watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew melons, etc.) is eaten, their outer rind does not need to be washed.

- A. True
- B. False

22



Slide 23

Q 8 - Answer:
False

Though only the inside of melons is eaten, their outer rind still must be washed. Bacteria present in soil can contaminate the skin of the melon.



Photo courtesy of National Cancer Institute
Renee Comiel (photographer)



For more information: To learn more about washing fruits and vegetables, check 7 Tips for Cleaning Fruits, Vegetables from the FDA at <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm256215.htm> (retrieved June 21, 2011)

Slide 24

When melons are cut, these bacteria are transferred to the part we eat and can grow to levels that cause foodborne illness.

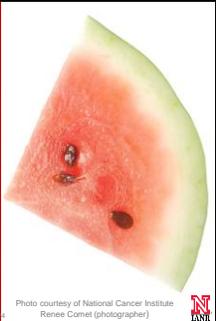


Photo courtesy of National Cancer Institute
Renee Comiel (photographer)



Slide 25

Q 9: All raw beef, pork, lamb, and veal steaks, chops, and roasts should be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 145 °F before removing them from heat source and then allowed to rest for at least 3 minutes before carving or consuming

A. True
B. False

25



Remember ... measure the temperature by placing the food thermometer in the thickest part of the meat.

Slide 26

**Q 9 - Answer:
True**

A “rest time” is the amount of time the product remains at the final temperature, after it has been removed from a grill, oven, or other heat source.



Photo courtesy of Cattlemen's Beef Board & National Cattlemen's Beef Association

Slide 27

USDA has revised its recommended cooking temperature for all whole cuts (steaks, roasts, and chops) of meat, including pork, beef, lamb and veal to 145 °F and then allowing a 3 minute rest time before carving or consuming.



Photo courtesy of FSIS/USDA Image Library

Slide 28

During the 3 minutes after meat is removed from the heat source, its temperature remains constant or continues to rise. This destroys pathogens and produces a product at its best quality.



Photo courtesy of FSIS/USDA Image Library

Slide 29

This change does NOT apply to ground meats, including ground beef, veal, lamb, and pork, which should be cooked to 160 °F and do not require a rest time.



Photo courtesy of California State Board & National Cattlemen's Beef Association

Slide 30

The safe cooking temperature for all poultry products, including ground chicken and turkey, remains at 165 °F.



Photo courtesy of FSIS/USDA Image Library

Slide 31

3 temperatures to remember

Ground meats (including ground beef, veal, lamb, & pork):
160 °F with no rest time

All poultry (including ground chicken & turkey):
165 °F with no rest time

Whole cuts of meat (including pork, beef, lamb, & veal steaks, roasts, & chops):
145 °F with addition of a 3 minute rest time

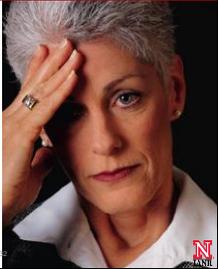
For more information: Learn more about the change in temperature recommendations at:
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_052411_01/index.asp
and
http://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/meat_temperatures.html (retrieved June 22, 2011)

Slide 32

How did you do?

Don't worry if you don't have all the answers.

There are several reliable sources that do ...



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Slide 33

Answer summer food safety questions by:

- Calling your local extension office or visiting its website <http://food.unl.edu/safety>
- Emailing, calling, live chat or online at: www.foodsafety.gov/keep/asktheexpert/index.html



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Slide 34

Enjoy a food safety savvy summer!



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Slide 35

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35

