

Choices

WOMEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE DIETARY CHANGE GROUP NEWS VOL. 15 • SUMMER 2000

Food Safety Smarts



Proper food handling is important in order to preserve the flavor, texture, and nutrients in food, to prevent spoilage (which means less waste), and to avoid foodborne illness caused by harmful bacteria. Let's look at some common questions about food safety:

Cold Storage

Does freezing food kill any bacteria in the food?
No, freezing may stop or prevent the growth of bacteria, but they aren't dead; bacteria can multiply once frozen food is thawed.

As long as raw food is refrigerated and used quickly, is it safe?

Not necessarily. In a national survey, 63 percent of Americans kept their refrigerator temperature too high. It must be kept below 42 degrees F. Also, if raw, meat, poultry, or seafood are stored *above* ready-to-eat foods in the fridge, there is danger that raw juices could drip in the food below.

Can meat be refrozen?

Yes, if it still has ice crystals and has been thawing in the refrigerator for one day or less, it's safe to refreeze. However, the quality may not be as good. Your best bet: cook it first, then freeze it.

Is It Safe?

Is moldy food safe to eat if you remove the moldy part?

With the exception of hard cheese, no—it's not safe. Mold is a sign of contamination. With cheese (except for soft cheese), just cut off one inch of cheese around the moldy parts.

How long can raw eggs be stored in the refrigerator?

Raw eggs in the shell last from four to five weeks. Just don't store them in the door of the fridge, which is not as cold.

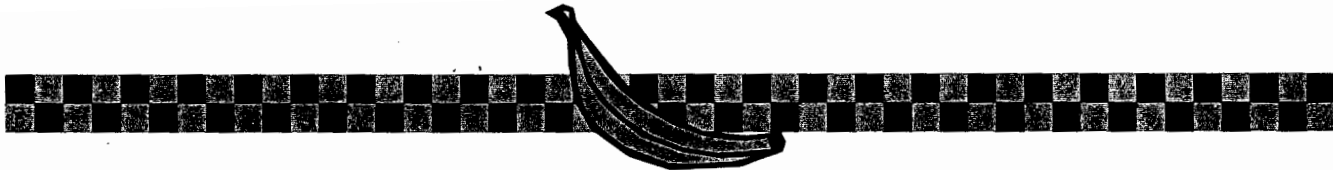
Do I have to throw out the marinade after soaking raw meat, poultry, or seafood?

Yes and no. You can boil the marinade (to kill disease-causing bacteria) and use it immediately, but don't store it for later use.

Keeping Things Clean

What should I do with produce after I wash it?

A common error is to place the washed produce back into its original container or bag. If there was any disease-causing bacteria in the bag or container, it's back on your food. Always use clean containers or bags.



A Habit of Service

For some people, community service is something they try to fit into their lives. For Barbara Torina, it is a way of life. Whether by sewing, singing, teaching, keeping fit, or acting in a local TV series, this WHI participant gives generously of her time and talents. Her bottom line? "It's in the giving that we receive," she says.

Barbara and her husband have a daughter who is a nutritionist and a son in medical school. Thirty years ago, they designed and built their own home in New Rochelle, New York, a suburb about 23 miles north of New York City. She runs a clothing design business out of her home and assists in her husband's architectural firm. Tapping into her love of music and performance, she also teaches singing, dancing, and recorder to Montessori schoolchildren.

But if you ask Barbara about what feeds her soul, she'll tell you about her other work—the unpaid hours of service motivated by her deep religious faith. "The Lord says, 'Clothe the naked and feed the poor,'" she explains. "You know, we can all do that!"

For over 13 years, Barbara has been making habits (hooded robes) for the priests, brothers, and sisters of the Franciscans of the Renewal, a Roman Catholic religious order based in the South Bronx which serves the poor. Over 1,000 yards of fabric and 900 hours of sewing have yielded over 225 habits, and Barbara's still going strong. She's the choir director and guitarist at her church and is part of a musical group that performs each week at nursing homes and Head Start programs. She also leads a weekly prayer meeting and is a member of the St. Joseph's Seminary Festival Choir, which recently performed at St. Patrick's

Cathedral in New York City. A member of the Papal Choir, Barbara sang before 125,000 people at a Mass in Central Park celebrating the pope's visit in 1995.

Her commitment to service was rewarded in 1995 during what Barbara calls, "the most spectacular moment of my life." Barbara had long admired Mother Teresa of Calcutta, whose work with the poor of India inspired many. Mother Teresa was visiting New York City in 1995, and Barbara was able to meet her and talk with her briefly. "I've had incredible experiences in my life," she reflects, "and I'm so very blessed."



Barbara Torina

Barbara is glad she's fit WHI into her busy schedule. As a participant in the Dietary Change and Calcium/Vitamin D programs at the Bronx Clinical Center, she's grateful for the focus WHI gives her to take care of her health. "As you get older, you tend to be more lax about your health," Barbara admits. "Since joining WHI, She's put herself on a program of regular exercise, low-fat eating, and regular medical check-ups."

Barbara loves to cook, especially with her home-grown produce. She's learned to reduce added fats: "Butter was something I loved to smear on my bread and cook with." She finds it harder to stay focused on her dietary goals now that her group doesn't meet as often. "Do a daily diary," she recommends. "That keeps you honest!"

"You must take advantage of good health, because it's something you cannot buy," Barbara says. "In order to be well, you have to eat well."

Western Hemisphere Salad

This salad is so-named because all the ingredients are native to the western hemisphere, and were unknown to the "Old World" prior to 1492. The recipe was created in 1992 in honor of the quincentenary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the "New World." Discover for yourself the nutritional treasures of this colorful, tasty, low-fat salad. It is high in fiber, Vitamin C, beta carotene, potassium and protein. It is very easy to make and is popular at pot-lucks.

- 1/2 cup chopped green onions, including green tips**
- 2 fresh tomatoes, chopped (about 2 cups)**
- 1 medium zucchini squash, diced (about 1 cup)**
- 1 cup corn, frozen or canned (drained)**
- 1 pound can (about 1 1/2 cups) dark red kidney beans or black beans, drained and rinsed**
- 1/2 cup mild picante sauce or salsa**
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro or parsley**
- 2 tablespoons lemon or lime juice**
- 1 or 2 cloves of garlic, minced**
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin**
- 1/2 teaspoon salt**
- 1 small ripe avocado, cut into small chunks (optional)**

Combine all ingredients except avocado in a mixing bowl. Stir to blend. Chill before serving. Add avocado chunks just before serving.

Makes about 6 cups. A serving can be 1/2 cup as a side dish or 1 cup as a main dish.

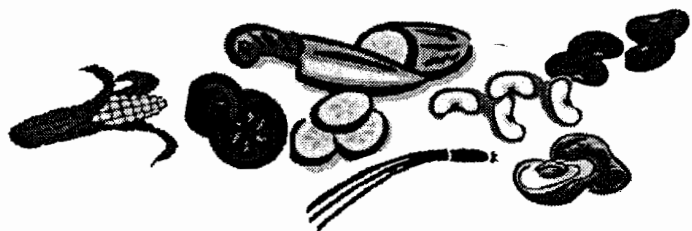
Unless avocado is used, this recipe has no added fat.

Fat: 2 grams per 1 cup serving

Vegetable Servings: 2 per 1 cup serving

Grain Servings: 1/2 per 1 cup serving

Recipe from the George Washington University WHI Clinical Center



Chicken Mondale

Delicious served over hot, cooked rice.

about 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into strips

2/3 cup pineapple juice

1/4 cup soy sauce

1/4 teaspoon ginger

1/8 teaspoon anise (optional)

1 clove garlic, peeled and minced

1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons brown sugar

Combine pineapple juice, soy sauce, ginger, anise, minced garlic, and brown sugar. Reserve 1/4 cup for basting and marinate chicken in the refrigerator for 1-4 hours.

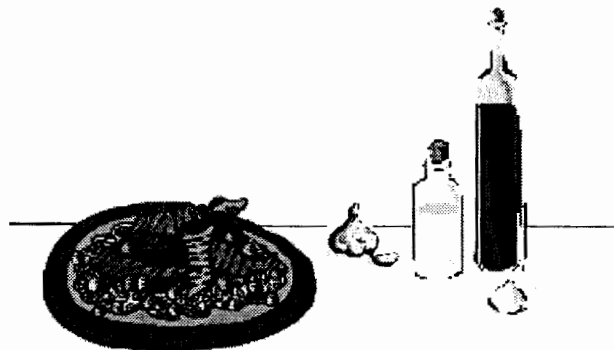
Broil chicken breast strips until no longer pink, turning once and basting occasionally with reserved marinade.

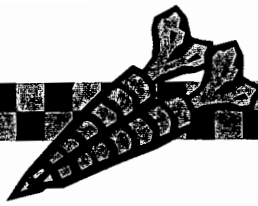
Serve over rice.

Makes 6 servings

Fat: 3 grams per serving

Recipe from the Birmingham WHI
Clinical Center





Harvesting Healthy Choices



From left to right: *Mary Tadano, Karen Jorgensen, Linda Leber, Kathryn Vines, and Doreen Benedict*

Members of Dietary Change group 8 from the Phoenix Clinical Center found it easy to meet their fruit/vegetable goal the day they visited The Farm at South Mountain, a non-profit teaching garden and restaurant. Lunch, made with organic produce from the farm, was served in a neighboring pecan grove. The WHI participants support the scarecrow's motto: "Eat More Veggies!"

Low-Fat Bites



■ Skipping cream in your coffee to avoid the fat? Try *Land O'Lakes Fat Free Half & Half*. It looks and tastes like half & half, but it's mostly made of skim milk. Substitute it for heavy cream in mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, or Fettuccine Alfredo. Find it in your grocer's dairy case, for about \$2.00 per quart.

■ Give coleslaw a nutritional boost by using shredded broccoli stalks in place of cabbage. A half-cup serving provides nearly four times the vitamin C and beta-carotene as traditional coleslaw.

■ Enjoy the fresh fruits of summer by adding them to your green salads. Instead of adding croutons, toss greens with blueberries or watermelon chunks. Strawberries taste great in spinach salad, too. Fruit-flavored vinaigrettes complement these salads nicely.

■ How much liquid do you need to prevent dehydration? To figure out the minimum amount you should drink daily, follow these steps:

1. Enter your weight: _____ = pounds
2. Your weight x .04: _____ = pounds of water lost
3. Line 2 (answer) x 2: _____ = cups of water needed. If the number of cups seems overwhelming, aim for at least 8-10 cups of liquid daily. Drink more liquid when the temperature is over 80 degrees Fahrenheit or when exercising or ill.

■ Top fresh strawberries or peach slices with a dollop of homemade light dessert topping. To make it, whip well-chilled evaporated fat-free milk in a cold bowl with a little sugar and vanilla.

■ If you use fresh rosemary in a recipe, save the stripped stems to use as skewers for your favorite shish kebabs. The rosemary scent will infuse chicken, beef, vegetables, or prawns with a fragrant herb flavor. Simply thread the meat, seafood, or vegetables on the rosemary stems like a regular skewer, and grill or broil as usual.



Food Safety Smarts

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Do I need to wash citrus fruits or melons since I'm only eating the fruit inside?

Yes, bacteria from the outside of food can be transferred. Before you cut melons, scrub the skins with water and a brush, so bacteria isn't spread during cutting. Washing an orange before peeling means your hands won't transfer any bacteria on the outside to the part you're eating.

For produce that can't be scrubbed, is rinsing or soaking better for cleaning?

Wash berries, lettuce (even the bagged, "pre-washed" kinds), and other non-scrubbable fruits and vegetables with fast-running water. The friction of the running water removes bacteria better than soaking.

Leftovers

How long can cooked meat or cooked poultry dishes be kept?

These foods can be stored in your refrigerator

for three to four days. All foods should be chilled within two hours of serving.

Can I reheat leftovers just until they're warm?

No; partially reheated food can cause bacteria to multiply—some can double in number within 20 minutes. Leftovers must be reheated until they're steaming hot (at least 165 degrees F). Use a food thermometer if you're unsure. Always reheat food in at least a 325 degree F oven, so the food doesn't stay at a lower temperature too long. If you use a microwave oven to reheat, rotate the food during heating and stir it afterwards to eliminate any "cold spots."

Thinking about safety steps in handling, preparing, and storing food could make the difference between good health and illness.

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