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Food Safety Education Month



Wash your hands often for 20 seconds.

Food safety is in your hands, and your home! Food Safety Education month is in September and every consumer has a role in how safe food is prepared, handled, and consumed. Your hands touch many items and surfaces throughout the day, so taking 20 seconds to wash them is the first step in keeping food safe.

Our hands also pass food from one person to another, whether at the dinner table or delivering food to a family member or neighbor. Food delivery de-

mand increased dramatically in recent months. This will continue as we approach the holiday season.

To learn more about handling delivered food safely, join the [Partnership for Food Safety Education](#) on August 25th at Noon CST for a webinar pack with new food delivery resources.

Along with handwashing, [fingernail hygiene](#) is equally important. Fingernails can hide dirt and bacteria. They can contribute to infections such as from pinworms. This particular infection is the most common worm infection in the U.S. Because of this, it is important to always wash your hands, and clean under your fingernails, after using the restroom or after changing baby diapers.

Learn more about safe food handling practices and more at [KSRE Extension Food Safety](#). More information regarding Food Safety Education month will be released soon.

MyPlate is now on Alexa!

For those who use Alexa, there is a new option to receive MyPlate nutrition information straight to your home.

The [MyPlate Alexa](#) skill targets parents and caregivers of babies and tod-

dlers to give science-based food and nutrition advice. More age groups will be added.

All information is based on the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025](#).

Some topics include developmental readiness in 4-5 month babies, responsive feeding in 6-11 month babies, and added sugars for 12-24 month toddlers.



Foods that Do Not Freeze Well

Gardens are bursting with bountiful produce this time of year. While many fruits and vegetables can be frozen, there are some that do not freeze well.

This is due to the high water content within the produce. Some produce that does not freeze well include cucumbers, lettuce, radishes, parsley, celery, and raw cabbage. They will become limp,

watery, and develop an oxidized color, aroma and flavor. In some herbs and seasonings, the flavors may become strong and bitter. Irish potatoes, baked or boiled, tend to become watery and mealy in texture.

If cucumbers or cabbage is pickled or marinated and then frozen, they can be frozen in that form. It is best to use

them partially frozen to help retain some texture.

Some other foods that do not freeze well include cooked eggs, sour cream, custards, and mayonnaise or salad dressing.

Learn more at the [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#).



Frozen lettuce
Photo: NCHFP



For recipes to make freezer pickles, see [The Wisconsin Safe Food Preservation Series: Homemade Pickles & Relishes](#) by Dr. Barbara Ingham

Try Freezer Pickles!

While plain cucumbers do not freeze well, pickled cucumbers are an option for freezing.

Salt draws out water and a sugar syrup will help firm the pickle texture. Slice cucumber thin for

quicker absorption of the sugar syrup.

Pickling variety cucumbers are best. Do not use waxed cucumbers as the wax interferes with brine absorption. As with canning pickles, remove the

blossom end and stem. Slice cucumbers 1/16th to 1/8th inch thick.

After freezing, thaw them in the refrigerator and store leftovers in the refrigerator.

Source: [Penn State Extension](#)

Do Your Pickles Taste Watery?

After going through the work of pickling cucumbers, you expect that great pickle flavor to come through. But why would they taste watery, or just lack flavor?

If you've used tested recipes, it could be due to the variety of cucumber used, and not all cucumbers are destined to make tasty pickles. If using a burpless or table cucumber variety, they will not make the best pickles. Pickling varieties are short and blocky in shape, with a firm flesh that makes a crisp pickle. Spartan Dawn, Liberty, Pioneer, SMR-8, Alibi, and Bush Pickle, are suggested varieties for Kansas gardens.

Use current pickling methods for best results. After canning, allow the jars of pickles to develop their flavor for at least 4-5 weeks before consuming.



Photo: NCHFP

Source: [KSRE Horticulture Information Center, Cucumber](#) and [Cucumbers and Melons](#)

It's Lunch Time!

As school's start, it's also time to remember food safety for school lunch. If you pack lunch for your child, keep these tips in mind:



Pack a wrap! These are easy ways to pack several nutritious foods in a hand-held sandwich.
Photo: USDA Flickr

- Have your child help with shopping and preparation for their lunch. Chances are increased your child will eat the whole lunch!
- Add colorful fruits and vegetables that are ready-to-eat.
- Change up the menu during the week so meals don't get boring.
- Use an insulated lunch bag with a small ice pack. Freeze juice boxes or fruit cups to help keep foods cold.
- Limit convenience foods that add extra fat, sodium and sugar.
- Prepare lunches the night before. Refrigerate cold items and add to the lunch bag in the morning.



Source: [What's for Lunch? It's in the Bag](#)—Iowa State University Extension

Recipe Ideas for Farmers Market Produce

Do you go to your local farmers market and just drool over all the fresh produce? How will you prepare those brussels sprouts or kale?

The From the Land of Kansas (FLOK) website has recipe ideas to help

you out. Some vendors may have these available for you to pick up as you shop. But they are also available on the [FLOK website](#).

Local farmers markets are great ways to find new foods to try. Ask

vendors what their favorite recipe to use an item new to you.

Learn more about the [FLOK program](#) and visit their booth in the Pride of Kansas building at the [Kansas State Fair](#).

Find a farmers market near you in this [online directory](#).

Not All Frozen Entrees are the Same

When buying frozen entrées, it is important to read the instructions for safe preparation. Just because the entrée looks brown and precooked on the package picture, it may be a raw product. A [recent recall](#) of raw frozen breaded stuffed chicken due to a *Salmonella* outbreak is a reminder of this important step.

Not all microwave foods are pre-cooked to be heated in the microwave. Some are raw foods that require cooking in the oven. Therefore, reading the package for preparation instructions is important. If the microwave is recommended cooking appliance, know the wattage of your oven to get the proper amount of heat to the food.

Whether using the microwave or the oven, always use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature. Learn more at [USDA Preparing Frozen Food](#).



Know your microwave! Stir or rotate food for even cooking. Check the temp!
Photo: USDA



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Those Pesky Pantry Pests



Flour beetles are common food pantry pests. Photo: USDA/ARS

Pantry pests can invade food storage spaces and cause havoc. Many of these pests enjoy grain-based products. Here are the common insects seen in home pantries:

- **Booklice (Psocids)** - Found in stored cereals and grains.
- **Carpet Beetles**— Found in cereals, flours, and baking mixes.

- **Cigarette Beetles**—Found in dried herbs, spices, cereals, flours, dried fruits, seeds, dried fish and meats.
- **Clothes Moths**—Found in some beverages.
- **Drugstore Beetle**—Found in pet food, seeds, flours, mixes, and spices. It is said they “eat any except cast iron!”
- **Flour Beetle**—Any grain product, flour, kernel or cereal.
- **Indianmeal Moth**—Found in cereals, stored grains, dried fruits, chocolate, and nuts.
- **Saw-Toothed Grain Beetle**— Found in foods of vegetable origin, grain products, nuts, candies, dried milk, and dried fruits.



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On the Web at
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Preventing Pantry Pests

Keeping storage areas clean and dry are the first line of defense against pests invading your food.



Flour beetle
Photo: USDA/ARS

Periodically clean storage areas to remove spilled food and damaged packages of food. A vacuum cleaner can easily remove spills from cracks

and crevices. Eliminate hiding places by sealing cracks and

crevices with putty or caulk.

If packages are damaged, inspect for insect presence or damage. If the food is still good, re-package in a sealable sturdy container. Cold-treat flours, cake mixes, and spices at 0°F for 3-7 days, making sure that the cold penetrates the material. Heat-treat beans, nuts, and whole grains by spreading them in a shallow pan and placing them in a 150°F oven for 15-20 minutes.

For more information, see [Household Pests of Kansas, MF3291](#).