

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

K-State Research and Extension Family Nutrition Program



DINING ON A DIME

Eating Better for Less

May / June

Food Habits That Can Make Us Sick

Has someone you know ever used the “five second rule” with dropped food, or double-dipped a food into a shared bowl? Did you know that studies have determined how many bacteria are transferred at these times?

Read on to find out why these poor practices are bad enough to spread disease-causing bacteria and make us sick.

The “Five Second Rule” Have you ever heard that dropped food will not be contaminated if it’s picked up within five seconds? This “rule” is totally false! Researchers at Clemson University studied bread and sausage dropped onto tile, wood and carpet. They found that a large number of bacteria were transferred to both of these foods when they were dropped onto any of the three types of floors, even for just five seconds. Many bacteria lived at least four weeks, even on dry floors.

What to do to keep yourself healthy? Hold onto your food, if possible! When you do happen to drop a food, discard it and get something clean to eat.

Double Dipping. If you see someone dip a food into a shared bowl of dip, take a bite, and then dip the same food back into the bowl, then you’ve witnessed “double dipping.” Another Clemson University study found that double dipping transfers a significant number of bacteria from the eater’s mouth into the remaining dip. Even if people turn the food around and dip with the part their mouths haven’t touched yet, the bacteria on their fingers contaminate the food and then the dip.

What to do to keep yourself healthy? Use individual dipping bowls instead of shared ones, and discard leftover dip rather than refrigerating it. Encourage the enjoyment of shared dip by spooning some directly onto foods instead of dipping directly into it. Added bonus: By measuring your food portions and then turning away from a larger bowl, you’ll likely save yourself from eating too many mindless calories as well!

Be sure to teach the young people in your life healthy eating practices, too.

Sources: 1. Dawson, P, I Han, M Cox, C Black, L Simmons. 2007. Residence time and food contact time effects on transfer of *Salmonella Typhimurium* from tile, wood and carpet: testing the 5-second rule. *J Applied Microbiol* 102:945-953; 2. Trevino, J, B Ballieu, R Yost, S Danna, G Harris, J Dejonckheere, D Dimitroff, M Philips, I Han, C Moore, P Dawson. 2009. Effect of biting before dipping (double-dipping) chips on the bacterial population of the dipping solution. *J Food Safety* 29:37-48.

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Saving Money with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines

The *2010 Dietary Guidelines* recommends eating habits that promote health and reduce the risk of chronic disease. Here's some of the advice for people ages two years and older, and how to save money while following it. (Visit www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines to see the entire document.)

If you're overweight, eat and drink fewer calories. How? One of the most economical ways to eat fewer calories is to “eat out” less often, if at all. Restaurant portions easily contribute more than 1,000 calories and average \$10 per meal. Other ways to save money while cutting calories are to stop buying sweetened beverages and/or alcohol and drink more water and fat-free/1% milk instead, and to stop buying expensive high-salt, high-solid-fat and high-sugar snack foods and eat more vegetables and fruits instead.



Fill half of your plate with vegetables and fruits. How? When they are on sale, buy extra amounts of dried, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables, and 100% juices. Buy only the amount of fresh produce that you will use before it spoils. Be aware of which types of fresh produce are more plentiful and less expensive during certain months of the year (for example, tomatoes and melons in the summer, sweet potatoes and cranberries in the fall).

Replace refined grains with whole grains. How? Eat more whole wheat foods, rolled oats, popcorn seeds and brown rice. (For instance, make the whole grain treat recipe on page 4.) Buy whole grains in bulk or in large containers, rather than in small packages. If your family eats bread, consider making it yourself. Making whole grain bread can save you money, and also allow you to decrease your intake of food additives and preservatives. You may be able to borrow an electric bread machine from a friend, or purchase a gently-used one on sale.

Choose a variety of protein foods. How? Eat more legumes and seafood. Buy packages or cans of legumes (such as red beans, black beans, garbanzos, lentils and split peas), as well as unsalted nuts and seeds, in bulk at discounted prices, when possible. Buy seafood, eggs, chicken, turkey, and lean beef and pork when they're on sale. Choose canned or frozen, or freeze extra servings of fresh meats at home. Higher-fat meats may seem lower in price, but you get less protein per pound than with leaner varieties, so go lean! Serve a three-ounce (cooked) portion for a huge cash savings if your family is currently supersizing.

Reduce sodium, solid fats and added sugars. How? Reduce the number of meals you eat out and the amount of processed/packaged foods that you eat. This will improve your health and your budget! Most of sodium, solid fats and added sugars we eat come from packaged foods, commercial baked goods and foods eaten away from home. By cooking at home more often, and by preparing foods purchased closer to their natural state, you can more easily meet the *2010 Dietary Guidelines*. See page 3 for tips on “cooking fresh” at home often.

Cooking Fresh at Home



Page 2 described how buying fewer restaurant meals and packaged foods can help you save money AND improve your health. But exactly how can you develop the habit of buying foods closer to their natural state and eating at home more often? *Dining on a Dime* offers these tips:

Plan ahead. Pick a time each week to plan the next week of menus. Use simple, quick-to-fix, tasty recipes that call for foods close to their natural state that are low in sodium, solid fats and added sugars. Keep your “cooking fresh” recipes in a notebook, box or a drawer, along with previously-planned family menus, so that you can refer to them easily.

Plan your week of menus around your upcoming schedule, considering those nights when you are obligated to have dinner away from home. Plan, too, for the nights where you’ll need to serve a meal quickly, such as by using leftovers or a slow-cooker recipe. Also, plan to use foods that you already have on hand, and possibly fresh foods that are advertised as being on sale. Write a grocery shopping list for items needed.

Shop. The outer perimeter of most grocery stores has many foods that are close to their natural state. Think of fresh vegetables and fruits, bulk unsalted nuts and seeds, dairy products, eggs, fresh seafood and lean meats and poultry, and whole grain breads.

Avoid going down the aisles with only highly-processed foods. Instead, look for the aisles with canned and dried fruits, 100% fruit juices, canned and dry legumes, canned seafood/poultry/meats, whole grain flours, rolled oats, brown rice, popcorn seeds, and frozen fruits/vegetables/seafood/poultry/meats.

Fresh snacks. Instead of relying on high-salt, high-solid-fat or high-sugar packaged snack foods, make it easy for you and your family to see and grab ready-to-eat unsalted nuts, vegetables (for example, baby carrots) or fruits (for example, grapes, raisins or canned fruit).

Family time. Get the whole family involved in “cooking fresh” to make the experience more enjoyable. Give age-appropriate activities to each family member, and help them feel proud to be part of the meal process. Tell jokes and stories. Turn off the phone and television. Turn on background music. Make “cooking fresh” fun. You’ll all look forward to sharing home-cooked meals.

Home-prepared frozen dinners. When “cooking fresh,” consider using recipes that freeze well so you can double them. Cooking once and eating two or three times saves time! Before serving the meal, freeze the extras. You’ll then have a dinner that’s easy to serve on a hectic day. For information about made-ahead meals (for instance, foods that freeze well and those that don’t!), visit www.ksre.ksu.edu/humannutrition/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=212

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office. This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.



Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner

Chocolate Whole Grain Surprise Treats (Makes 12 servings)

Ingredients

3 large carrots, or more if small	1 1/4 cups whole wheat flour
1/2 cup liquid pasteurized eggs OR 2 raw eggs	2/3 cup granulated white sugar
2 tablespoons vegetable oil	1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/3 cup applesauce	1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring	1/8 teaspoon baking powder
	1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder



Directions

1. Wash your hands and work area. **2.** Peel and finely grate carrots to yield 1 cup. **3.** In a medium bowl, stir together carrots, eggs, oil, applesauce and vanilla. **4.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. **5.** Spray an 8 x 8-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. **6.** In a large bowl, stir together flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking soda, baking powder and cocoa powder. **7.** Stir carrot mixture into flour mixture. Mix until just moistened. **8.** Pour batter into pan. Bake 25 to 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. **9.** Let cool. Cut into 12 pieces. Extra servings freeze well.

Nutrition Facts per serving: 130 calories, 3 g fat, 0.5 grams saturated fat, 0 grams trans fat, 24 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 0 mg cholesterol, 135 mg sodium and 3 g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 30% vitamin A, 2% vitamin C, 2% calcium, 6% iron.

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