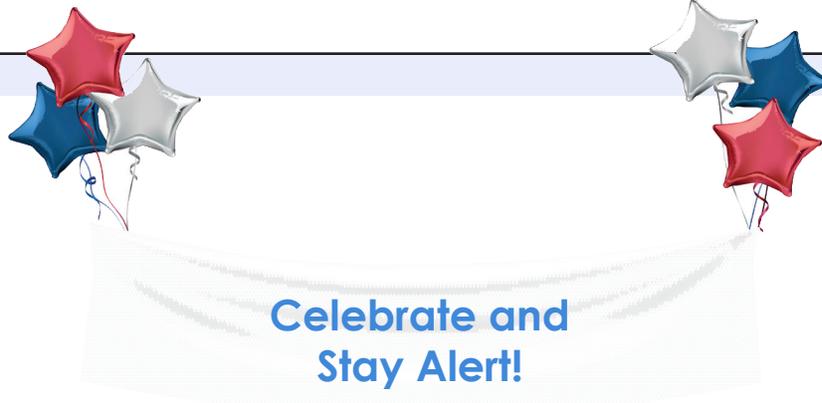


Mealtime Memo

for Child Care



July 4th is a fun time for special occasion foods. It is also a time when we need to stay alert and follow safe food handling practices. With the Fourth of July coming, what celebratory activities do you have planned for your child care center or home? Do you have plans to incorporate a holiday-themed meal? If so, it is important to cook and serve meals that are safe for children to consume. Young children's underdeveloped immune systems make it harder for them to fight off foodborne illnesses. As a child care provider, make sure safe food handling practices are followed. This includes purchasing foods, cooking foods at the appropriate temperatures, and storing leftovers properly. These steps will help reduce the occurrence of any foodborne illness in your center or home. In this month's Mealtime Memo, we will discuss food safety best practices to follow during purchasing, cooking, and storing foods.

Purchasing

Let's start with purchasing. When purchasing food for your center or home, make sure to follow proper food safety practices. Always purchase food from a licensed, reputable company. Here are some tips to consider when purchasing foods:

- Avoid purchasing dented or swollen cans
- Check expiration date
- Keep cold foods cold
- Keep hot foods hot
- Bag fresh produce separately from raw meats, poultry, and seafood
- Inspect packaging for rips or tears
- Inspect produce for signs of bruises, blemishes, and pests



Mealtime Memo

Cooking

When cooking foods for the children in your care, follow these four steps for safety.

Step 1: Clean – Wash hands often, especially before, during, and after preparing food. Wash produce before preparing. Clean work surfaces and utensils often. Germs can spread and survive in many places.

Step 2: Separate – Don't cross-contaminate. Raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs can spread illness causing bacteria to ready-to-eat foods, so keep them separate.

Step 3: Cook – Ensure foods are cooked to the right temperature by always using a thermometer. Use the Minimum Cooking Temperatures Chart as a reference guide.



Minimum Cooking Temperatures Chart

Internal Temperature	Food
145 °F	whole cuts of beef, pork, veal, and lamb (then allow the meat to rest for 3 minutes before carving or eating)
145 °F	fresh ham (raw)
145 °F	fin fish (or cook until flesh is opaque)
160 °F	ground meats, such as beef and pork
165 °F	all poultry, including ground chicken and turkey
165 °F	leftovers and casseroles

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html>



Step 4: Chill – Refrigerate and freeze food properly. Bacteria that cause food poisoning multiplies quickest between 40 °F to 140 °F. Do not allow food to sit out unrefrigerated for more than 2 hours, but if the room or air temperature is above 90 °F refrigerate within 1 hour.



Storing Foods

After preparing and serving food, make sure all leftovers are put away properly. Storing foods at 40 °F or below will slow the growth of bacteria and reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Planned use of the remaining portion will determine if the food will be stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

See the Storage Chart for correct storage temperatures and additional information. These short time limits for refrigerated foods will help keep them from spoiling or becoming dangerous to eat. The guidelines for freezer storage are for quality only.

Storage Chart

Category	Food	Refrigerator (40 °F or below)	Freezer (0 °F or below)
Salad	Egg, chicken, ham, tuna, and macaroni salads	3 to 4 days	Does not freeze well
Hot Dogs	Opened package	1 week	1 to 2 months
	Unopened package	2 weeks	
Luncheon Meat	Opened package or deli sliced	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
	Unopened package	2 weeks	
Bacon and Sausage	Bacon	1 week	1 month
	Sausage raw – from chicken, turkey, pork, or beef	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
Hamburger and Other Ground Meats	Hamburger, ground beef, turkey, veal, pork, lamb, and mixtures of them	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb, and Pork	Steaks	3 to 5 days	6 to 12 months
	Chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months
	Roasts	3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months
Fresh Poultry	Chicken or turkey, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
	Chicken or turkey, pieces	1 to 2 days	9 months
Soups and Stews	Vegetable or meat added	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Leftovers	Cooked meat or poultry	3 to 4 days	2 to 6 months
	Chicken nuggets or patties	3 to 4 days	1 to 3 months
	Pizza	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/storage-times.html>

Preparing kid-friendly food is important. Below are some tips on ways to involve children and suggestions for child care providers. Always ensure meals served meet CACFP meal pattern requirements.

Tips for Involving Children

- Wash grapes or other fruit
- Stir ingredients together
- Premeasure items for cooking

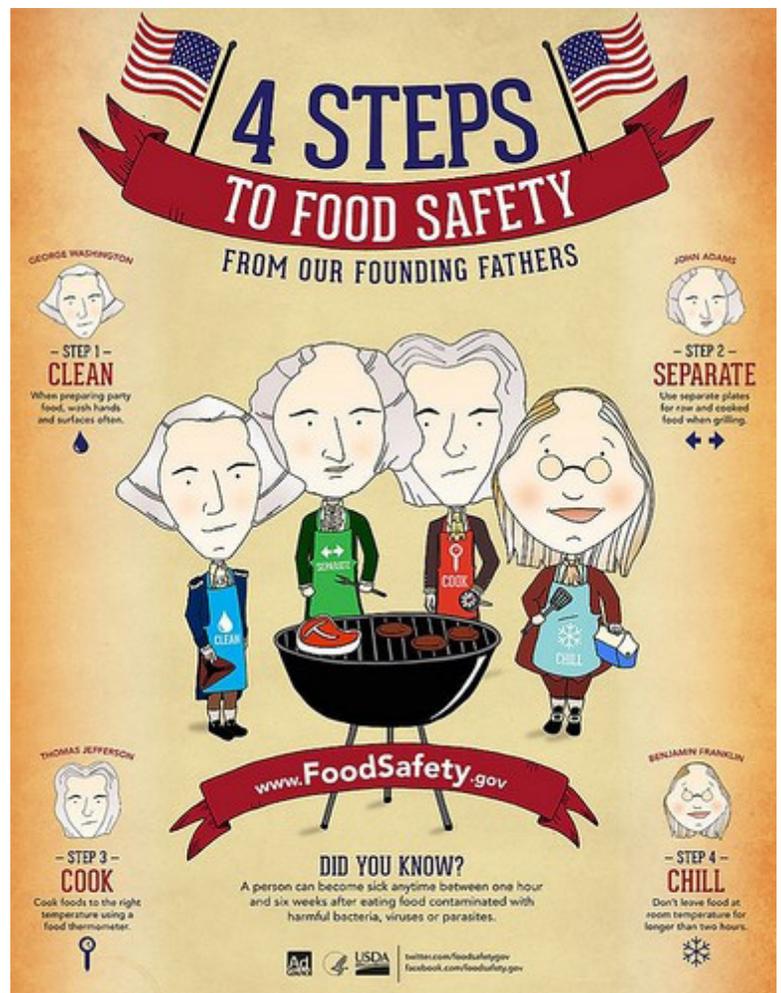
Tips for Child Care Providers

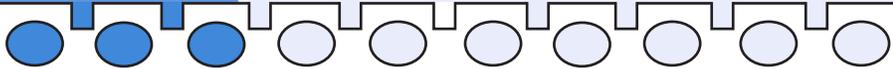
- Make sure everything stays clean
- Ensure children are careful and don't get hurt
- Involve children in serving food

Celebrating the Fourth of July

We celebrate the Fourth of July as our Independence Day. Share information about the Declaration of Independence with the children. Tell them the names of our forefathers who signed the Declaration of Independence such as Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin, and tell them how Jefferson and Adams later became President of the United States of America.

This infographic featuring food safety tips from the Founding Fathers was created as part of the Food Safe Families consumer food safety education campaign. Retrieved from USDA: <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2012/07/02/four-food-safety-tips-fourth-how-protect-your-family-surprising-july-4th>





Mealtime Memo

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