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FOOD SAFETY AT 4-H CLUB MEETINGS

Clover Safe notes are intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and members nine years and older.



According to information available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention there are 5,000 deaths, 325,000 hospitalizations, and 76 million illnesses caused by food poisoning annually.

Because food is often prepared for serving at 4-H club meetings the potential exists for the transmission of food poisoning. By establishing and following proper food handling and preparation practices the risks for causing food poisoning can be significantly reduced or eliminated.

Tips for Food Safety at 4-H Club Meetings

- Always begin your food preparation activities by washing your hands with soap and warm water. Moreover, always wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, or using the restroom.
- Keep food either hot (at 140 °f or higher) or cold (at 41°f or lower). Note: the temperature of a refrigerator should be 40°f or less and freezer should be 0°f or below.
- Wash counter tops and cutting boards with soapy water prior to starting food preparation activities. Wash can tops before opening.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before slicing, cutting, or processing.
- After handling and preparing raw meat, wash the preparation surface and your hands with soap and warm water.
- Follow food recipes precisely and completely, including proper cooking times.
- Do not take food preparation short cuts.
- Discard food that is not fresh and do not use canned goods that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted.
- Keep hot food hot by holding it in an oven or using a heated chafing dish when on a serving line.
- Keep prepared foods covered at all times, including when being transported.
- If hot or cold food is being transported to the meeting site, it should be carried in a cooler with ice if it is cold food or an insulated container if it is hot food.
- Promptly refrigerate left over food. Heated food should be refrigerated within two hours of cooking.
- Pot lucks and buffets can pose special food safety risks. Never allow hot or cold foods to enter the danger zone between 40 to 140 °F for longer than two hours. This includes the time for preparation, transportation, and serving.
- See the University of California Cooperative Extension brochure entitled “Make It Safe - Keep It Safe, FIGHT BAC! Keep Food Safe From Bacteria” for additional information about food preparation and handling safety. This brochure is available at county Cooperative Extension offices and online at: <http://ucanr.org/fightbac>