

Extension Homemakers

Arkansas County Newsletter

November, 2020



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Gratitude is an emotion expressing thankfulness and appreciation. Studies show that the practice of gratitude can help to increase your mental and physical health. It can lower blood pressure and improve immune function. Grateful people engage in more exercise, have better dietary behaviors, are less likely to smoke and abuse alcohol and have higher rates of medication adherence. Being grateful is the gift that seriously keeps on giving. We are grateful for each of you and hope to see you soon!

Ways to Practice Gratitude

- **Heath: What did your body do for you today?** Did you know you take about 8 million breaths a year? Your feet can take you up a mountain; your arms can hold someone you love. Take a minute to marvel at the finely tuned machinery of your body, and thank yourself for the steps you take every day to keep it safe and healthy.
- **Eat: What did you feed your body to nourish yourself today?** Was it an old favorite, something you made or something new and different? Take a minute to savor an especially yummy meal.
- **Activity: What did you do that you really enjoyed today?** Did you give it your all when exercising today, or find a quiet moment to reflect? Take a minute to think back on one particularly awesome moment.
- **Relationship: Who do you look forward to seeing?** Is it someone who always has a smile for you, has your back or makes you laugh? Take a minute to smile as you think about this special person.
- **Time: What are you doing right now?** Every single day you wake up with 24 brand new hours. The past is history, the future is a mystery and today is a gift. That's why they call it the present! Take a minute to be thankful for the gift of time, including any extra time you have right now for your family or yourself.

Please take extra care to maintain good practices such as maintaining social distance, wearing masks and handwashing. For more healthy life resources contact the Arkansas County Cooperative Extension Service or visit our website at: <https://division.uaex.edu/employees/covid-19/mental-health.aspx>.

Look us up on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/ArkansasCountyEHC

UAMS BLANKET DRIVE

Arkansas Extension Homemakers are collecting blankets this Christmas for UAMS cancer patients. Blankets are given to patients who have to be in the hospital over the Christmas holiday. Blankets donated to UAMS must be store bought for health reasons. The \$5-\$10 rolled up blankets can be purchased at many locations (Dollar General, Family Dollar and Walmart have them). EH members, who would like to donate blankets, can drop them off at the Arkansas County Extension Office by **December 1**. This is one of the many excellent community service projects that EHC members are helping with around the state this holiday season. Thanks so much for all you do in helping to support EHC!



ONE MILLION MEALS

Many families struggle with food insecurity, the statewide EHC Project for the 2019-20 year. EHC members and friends are encouraged to make a monetary donation as their budget permits. Please take this opportunity to support one of our local food pantries or the state food bank at www.uaex.edu/ehc.

HOLIDAY FOODS SAFETY

Fall and winter holidays are sometimes described as the most wonderful time of the year. The U. S. Food and Drug Administration reminds everyone to practice safe food handling using four simple steps throughout the year:

- Clean - Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Cook - Cook to the right temperature.
- Separate - Separate raw meats from other foods.
- Chill - Refrigerate foods promptly.

Practicing food safety in purchasing, preparing, and sharing your holiday foods will help you, family, friends, and others have a wonderful holiday season. Enclosed is a quick True or False quiz to test your Holiday Foods Safety knowledge that I hope you will enjoy.



Visit our website at: <http://www.uaex.edu/counties/arkansas>





Holiday Foods Safety 101

Here's a quick **True or False** quiz to test your Holiday Foods Safety knowledge.



1. There is evidence the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads to people through food.
2. Wash poultry before cooking.
3. Refrigerate leftovers within 3 hours after food has cooled to room temperature.
4. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables with a solution of water and sanitizer to remove germs.
5. Refrigerate your whole cooked unstuffed turkey after it has cooled to room temperature if you won't serve it for several hours or a day later.
6. You can sample uncooked cookie dough if it doesn't contain eggs.
7. When reheating sauces, soups, and gravy simmer until warmed thoroughly.
8. Cream cheese can be left out of the refrigerator until it softens or overnight.
9. Pumpkin pie can be stored at room temperature once it has been cooked.
10. The best indicator a meat, poultry, pork, or other protein food is done is to follow the package directions and overall appearance.



Holiday Foods Safety 101 - Answers

1. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, currently, there is **no** evidence to suggest that handling food or consuming food is associated with COVID-19. (**#1 is False.**) Coronaviruses, like the one that causes COVID-19, are thought to spread mostly person-to-person through respiratory droplets when someone coughs, sneezes, or talks. It is possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, including food or food packaging, that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

After shopping, handling food packages, or before preparing or eating food, it is important to always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Remember, it is always important to follow good food safety practices to reduce the risk of illness from common foodborne pathogens.

The risk of getting COVID-19 from food you cook yourself or from handling and consuming food from restaurants and takeout or drive-thru meals is thought to be very low. Currently, there is no evidence that food is associated with spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

The risk of infection by the virus from food products, food packaging, or bags is thought to be very low. Currently, no cases of COVID-19 have been identified where infection was thought to have occurred by touching food, food packaging, or shopping bags.

Although some people who work in food production and processing facilities have gotten COVID-19, there is no evidence of the virus spreading to consumers through the food or packaging that workers in these facilities may have handled.

2. According to the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, washing raw poultry — and even beef, pork, lamb or veal — before cooking is not recommended because bacteria in the raw meat and juices can be spread to other foods, utensils and surfaces. (**#2 is False.**) Be sure to clean any surfaces and utensils that come in contact with raw poultry, meat, or other protein food and always use a separate cutting board.

3. Refrigerate leftovers within two hours after food has cooled to room temperature. (**#3 is False.**) The danger zone for cooked food is between 40°F and 140°F. Food left out longer than two hours at room temperature can become contaminated with bacteria. Refrigerate or re-heat. Consider the drive time for guests if they are taking food home.

4. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Scrub firm produce with a clean produce brush. (**#4 is False.**) DO NOT wash produce with soap, bleach, sanitizer, alcohol, disinfectant, or any other chemical.

5. It is not recommended to refrigerate a whole cooked turkey even without stuffing. (**#5 is False.**) It could take too long to cool down to a safe temperature. For optimal safety, cut whole or large pieces of poultry in small pieces. It's okay to leave the drumsticks, thighs, and wings intact. Refrigerate in covered shallow containers within 2 hours of cooking. This is very important to ensure rapid, even cooling and quick reheating.

6. Raw cookie dough from a package or homemade that contains flour and eggs or flour and no eggs can contain bacteria that could make you sick. Uncooked flour can contain contaminants that are killed by baking. Raw eggs should never be consumed. (**#6 is False.**)

7. Reheat sauces, soups, and gravies to a boil. Simmering is below the boiling point and won't kill bacteria. (**#7 is False.**)

8. Food safety experts with the U.S. government say that 2 hours is the max that cream cheese should sit at room temperature. (**#8 is False.**) Cakes, cheese balls, and other recipes made with cream cheese should be refrigerated following the 2-hour rule.

9. Custard pies are pies that are filled with a custard base – eggs, some type of liquid and sweeteners – and baked until the mixture is set. While that basic custard mixture can make a nice pie filling itself, pumpkin pies, sweet potato pies, buttermilk pies, chess pies and even pecan pies are all custard-based pies. Custard or cream pies should be stored in the refrigerator following the 2-hour rule. (**#9 is False.**)

10. The best indicator a meat, poultry, pork, or other protein food is done is a meat thermometer. A whole turkey is safe cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F throughout the bird. (**#10 is False.**) Check the internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast. All turkey meat including any that remains pink, is safe to eat as soon as all the parts reach at least 165°F. The stuffing should reach 165°F, whether cooked inside the bird or in a separate dish.