

The NEBLINE

Nebraska Cooperative Extension Newsletter
Lancaster County

THE NEBLINE is published monthly by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Rd., Lincoln, Nebraska, 68528-1507. Contact Brenda Corder, (402) 441-7180 for more information.



Gary C. Bergman, Extension Educator—Unit Leader

NOTICE: All programs and events listed in this newsletter will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center unless noted otherwise. Use of commercial and trade names does not imply approval or constitute endorsement by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County.

- Mary Abbott, Extension Assistant
- Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator
- Tina Brown, AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer
- Corey Brubaker, Extension Educator
- Maureen Burson, Extension Educator
- Brenda Corder, Publication & Resource Assistant
- Linda Detsauer, Nutrition Advisor
- Tom Dorn, Extension Educator
- Soni Cochran, Extension Assistant
- Lenora Fittro, Nutrition Advisor
- Arlene Hanna, Extension Associate
- Alice Henneman, Extension Educator
- Don Janssen, Extension Educator
- LaDeane Jha, Extension Educator
- Ellen Kraft, Extension Assistant
- Tracy Kulm, Extension Assistant
- Deanna Karmazin, Extension Assistant
- Mary Jane McReynolds, Extension Assistant
- Charlene Morris, Nutrition Advisor
- Nobuko Nyman, Nutrition Advisor
- Barb Ogg, Extension Educator
- Sondra Phillips, Nutrition Advisor
- Warder Shires, Extension Educator
- David Smith, Extension Technologist
- Marilyn Waldron, Nutrition Advisor
- Karen Whitson, AmeriCorps VISTA
- Jim Wies, Extension Assistant
- Barb Yllescas, Extension Assistant



Phone numbers:

- Office (leave message after hours) 441-7180
- After hours 441-7170
- FAX 441-7148
- COMPOSTING HOTLINE 441-7139
- NUFACTS INFORMATION CENTER 441-7188

OFFICE HOURS: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday



Nebline Feedback

In order to best serve our subscribers, this form will appear in every issue of THE NEBLINE. You can use this form to:

1. Change your address or order a subscription (please print)
2. Submit general comments and/or story ideas

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

- Order subscription (free—however, there is an annual \$5 mailing and handling fee for zip codes other than 683—, 684—, 685—, 68003, 68017, and 68065)
- Change of Address

Comments _____

Story Idea(s) _____

Return to:
University of Nebraska
Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, Nebraska 68528-1507

Extension Calendar

All programs and events will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center unless otherwise noted.

November 19

- Rabbit VIPS Committee Meeting 7 p.m.
- 4-H Cat Club Meeting 7 p.m.
- Fair Board Meeting 7:30 p.m.

November 26 & 27

HOLIDAY—Office Closed

December 1

- 4-H Council Meeting 7 p.m.

December 12

- Annual Ag Society Meeting 9 a.m.

December 13

- 4-H Ambassador Meeting 1:45 p.m.
- 4-H Teen Council Meeting 3-5 p.m.

December 14

- 4-H Shooting Sports Club Meeting 7 p.m.
- Extension Board Meeting 7:30 p.m.

December 15

- 55 Alive Mature Driving Class 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

December 16

- 55 Alive Mature Driving Class 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Auntie Bacteria's holiday advice

continued from front page

DEAR HHH:

I'd suggest a 1-2-3 day approach. The first day, buy most of your foods. The next day, do as much pre-preparation as possible. The third day, complete the final cooking and enjoy your meal!

Unless food will be frozen, it's safest to start preparing most perishable foods no more than a day before a meal. For example:

- Assemble a vegetable casserole a day in advance and then bake the day of your dinner. Plan 15 to 20 minutes additional heating time for the refrigerated cold casserole.

- Cut fruits and vegetables within a day of your meal for salads and relish trays. Store all CUT fruits and vegetables covered, such as in storage containers or one-time use plastic bags in the refrigerator. Store fresh cut produce above raw meat, poultry and fish and below cooked items.

Non-perishable foods such as cakes and cookies can be prepared a few days in advance and will still taste good. Or, they can be frozen for longer storage.

Save time by setting your table the day before your holiday meal. Also, set out all food preparation and service utensils. Or, assign children or others to set the table before you eat.

Here are some special tips for handling meat, poultry and fish:

- As a general rule-of-thumb, purchase fresh raw meat, poultry or fish no more than a day or two before your holiday meal. Freeze for longer storage. These foods taste freshest if cooked the day of your meal.

- If you have frozen your meat, poultry or fish, plan time for safe thawing in your refrigerator. Allow approximately 24 hours for each five pounds of weight.

- Prevent cross-contamination. Thaw or store a package of raw meat, poultry or fish on a plate on a lower shelf of your refrigerator to prevent its juices from dripping on other foods.

- If you prepare meat, poultry or fish the day before your meal, divide it into small portions. Then refrigerate in loosely covered shallow containers within two hours of cooking—limit depth of meat, etc. to about two inches. Cover tightly when cooled. On the day of your meal, reheat thoroughly to a temperature of 165° F until hot and steaming. For best safety and quality, reheat foods only once. Then either eat or toss.

Auntie Advises: Keep ahead of bacteria when getting a head start on holiday food preparation. Prepare and store foods safely.

Number 5

Dear Auntie B:

What should I do with the food if my guests are late?

—From: *Leary about Latecomers*

DEAR LL:

Follow the same guidelines for holding hot take-out foods given earlier (see number 3). Keep COLD foods refrigerated. Hold thoroughly cooked HOT foods in the oven so their temperature stays at 140° F or above. If your guests will be more than two hours late, refrigerate cooked foods in shallow pans and reheat thoroughly to 165° F when they arrive.

Auntie Advises: Don't let bacteria show up at your table while you're waiting for late guests. Hold food at safe temperatures.

Number 6

Dear Auntie B:

I have a small kitchen and little time to prepare a big

holiday meal for my relatives. I hardly have the time and space to get the main dish ready. But, I'd still like to get everyone together for a family meal.

—From: *Cramped in the Kitchen*

Dear CK:

Prepare just the main dish. Buy a special bread and order a cold relish tray from the grocery store. Ask one of your guests to bring a salad. Have someone else furnish dessert. Or, meet at a restaurant and avoid cooking entirely.

Auntie Advises: When it's difficult to make a meal for guests, do as Auntie sometimes does, make reservations!

A Final Tip from Auntie:

The 10 most common causes of spreading disease are your fingers! Wash your hands well—about 20 seconds—before and after handling food. Don't give bacteria a free ride to your holiday gatherings!

Best Wishes for the Holidays!

For more information:

Information in this article comes in part from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines. Check the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service Website (www.fsis.usda.gov) and the Fight BAC! (TM) Website (fightbac.org) for more food safety tips for the holidays.

A SPECIAL "THANKS": A special "thank you" to Dr. Fayrene Hamouz and her Food Safety and Sanitation Class, University of Nebraska Department of Nutritional Science and Dietetics, for reviewing Auntie B's comments. And for making sure that Auntie B didn't get too carried away in her Holiday Kitchen Crusade!