

Improper food storage can lead to illness

Did you know that home kitchens are the source of more food-related illnesses than restaurants? Most people are careless in their own kitchens when it comes to food storage and food safety.

How many times have you or your family said, "I don't feel good. It must have been something I ate." Improper storage of food not only increases the risk of food poisoning but also the loss of nutrients and good taste.

Don't refrigerate tomatoes. They will lose their flavor. Let them ripen at room temperature. Keep potatoes in a cool, dry, dark, well-ventilated location, not the refrigerator. Once they start to sprout, throw them out. Don't store onions with potatoes. Onions produce a gas that helps potatoes to rot faster. Store onions in a cool, dry, ventilated place.

In the refrigerator, bread will lose



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moisture and go stale faster. It's a better idea to keep the bread in the freezer and use as needed. This is particularly important for whole wheat bread made without preservatives.

BANANA SKINS turn black in the refrigerator. They are still edible but may lose some of their flavor and texture. To keep vegetables green and fresh, line the bottom of the storage compartment in the refrigerator with paper towels. This absorbs excess moisture, keeping them fresh and crisp.

Storing food under the sink is potentially dangerous. Cleaning products are generally kept there, and these could leak or soak through the cardboard or bags. Leaking or sweating pipes can rust cans and damage boxes.

When refrigerating cottage

cheese, turn the container upside down onto a plate. This creates a better seal against air. Remember, soft cheeses are more perishable than hard ones. Cottage cheese should be used within two to three days after opening.

Nuts are best refrigerated or frozen for longer storage. Because they are high in fat, they can turn rancid. The same goes for peanut butter, even though it's less spreadable when cold. Syrup and honey are better protected from mold in your refrigerator. If crystals form, simply place containers in hot water before use.

COFFEE AND TEA should be kept tightly covered to stay fresh. They keep best refrigerated or frozen. Cabinets over the stove get hot. Most foods, including spices, packaged and canned foods, won't last

long under such conditions. Use these places for storage of seldom-used pots and pans.

Butter and margarine should be refrigerated to prevent rancidity. Wrap them well if you are refrigerating or freezing, as both pick up odors from other foods.

The refrigerator door does not stay as cold as the rest of the refrigerator so do not store highly perishable foods there, such as milk or eggs. Use the door for storing condiments.

Some dry, packaged foods and canned foods require refrigeration once they are opened, some even before they are opened. Get into the habit of checking labels for storage information.

The faster foods are cooled, the less time there is for bacteria to grow. Avoid putting hot leftovers into large containers. The center may be dangerously warm for too long. Instead, put into small containers to cool faster.

FOODS SHOULD not be stacked and refrigerator shelves should never be covered with foil or any material that keeps down air circulation. Food placement affects the air circulation and the efficiency of the re-

frigerator. Resist any temptation to taste food that doesn't seem right. You don't have to swallow the food to be

poisoned by the toxins produced by certain types of bacteria. Develop excellent food storage savvy for economic and health reasons.

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cooking calendar

HEALTHY COOKIES

The creators of a line of healthy cookies come to Providence Hospital in Southfield at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 15, to speak on "Cookie Power — How to Make Changes That Matter." They are Dr. Marvin Wayne and Dr. Stephen Yarnall both native Detroiters now living in Seattle and partners in a successful business known as "Dr. Cookie Gourmet Cookies Inc." Their line of cookies is low in cholesterol, low in salt and high in fiber. The free program will be in the hospital's Fisher Center auditorium, 16001 W. Nine Mile. For more information call 424-5770.

Pork chops are hearty if stuffed

Cold weather can make your family hungry for hot and hearty foods. You may want to try these fruit-stuffed pork chops for a weekend meal.

You can gussy this up for a spectacular company entree, flaming the chops with orange liqueur. Remember that liqueur must be at least 70 proof in order to flame. Heat it until hot but not boiling before igniting with a long match.

STUFFED PORK CHOPS
¾ cup prepared mince meat
¼ cup soft bread crumbs
1 small apple, finely chopped
2 tablespoons chopped walnuts
¼ cup orange juice
6 pork loin chops, cut 1½ inches thick (about 4 pounds)
1 tablespoon cooking oil
¼ cup orange liqueur (optional)

For stuffing, in a medium mixing bowl combine mince meat, bread crumbs, apple and nuts. Stir in 2 tablespoons of the orange juice. Cut a pocket in each chop by cutting from the fat side almost to the bone. Spoon about ¼-cup stuffing into each pocket. Fasten openings with wooden toothpicks, if necessary.

In a large skillet brown the chops, 3 at a time, in hot oil. Arrange chops in a 13-by-5-by-2-inch baking dish. Season with salt and pepper. Pour remaining orange juice over chops. Bake, covered, in a 350-degree oven about 1 hour or until tender. Transfer chops to a heat-proof platter.

If desired, heat orange liqueur in a small saucepan just until hot. Remove from heat. Using a long match, ignite liqueur and pour over chops. Serve when flames subside. Makes 6 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 310 cal, 24 g pro, 26 g carb, 12 g fat, 71 mg chol, 174 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 20 percent vit. C, 87 percent thiamine, 21 percent riboflavin, 32 percent niacin.

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