

Warns county agent

Don't take bacteria on picnic, outings

When you're out in the sun this summer, take special care not only against getting burned but also against the harmful effects of bacteria found in improperly cared for food, says Janet Voorheis, Oakland County extension home economist, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University.

With summertime, comes family outings, picnics and the importance of proper food handling versus poor food handling habits resulting in harmful bacteria contamination.

Causes for foodborne illnesses are directly related to harmful bacteria in foods due to poor habits of the consumer. The "infamous four" bacteria found in food are salmonella, clostridium perfringens, staphylococcus and botulism. Each of these has its own characteristics for finding the way into the consumer's stomach.

Salmonella usually comes with a picnic through such foods as raw meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products and can then contaminate other foods. Salmonella bacteria can cause nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, diarrhea and fever.

Large picnics and festivals are often related to outbreaks of poisoning from clostridium perfringens when large amounts of foods have been prepared and then left to stand at outdoor temperatures for long periods of time. The foods that are sources of this bacteria are meats, poultry and other high protein foods.

RAW MEATS, the skin, the nose and throats of people are homing grounds for staphylococcus. Contamination occurs when food comes into contact with people during its processing or preparation. Food poisoning by these bacteria most often involves custards, cream filled pastries, eggs,

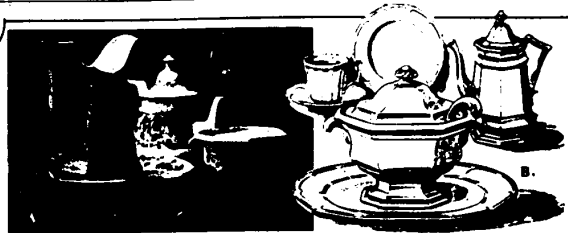
ham, chicken and potato salads, which should be kept at below 40°F. before use.

Be sure that the home-canned string beans to be taken on your camping trip were properly prepared or you may come into contact with the most serious form of

illness caused by food, botulism. Botulism is most commonly found in home-canned foods such as string beans, beets and corn prepared by methods other than pressure canning.

Prevention of the "infamous four" bacteria can begin at the grocery store and with the general handling of food products. Safety rules should be practiced not only in the home but also when camping, picnicking or even at banquets. Practicing good safety rules could help eliminate unnecessary illness and often death.

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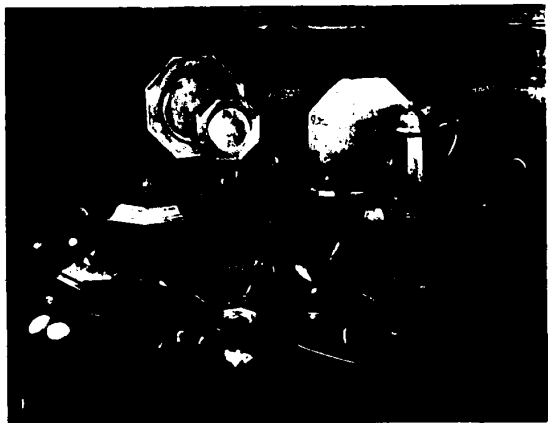
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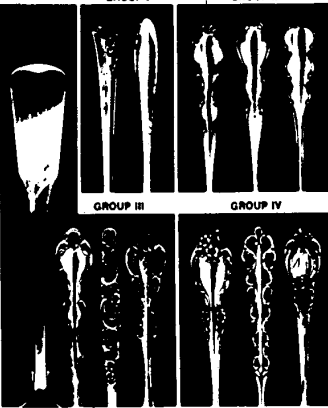
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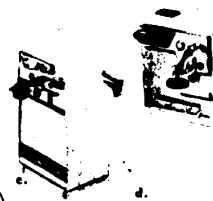
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