

Food, cooking precautions from experts

Whenever a new warning or recommendation comes out about food safety, I try to heed it. After all, it's better to be safe than sorry, I figure. But sometimes the advice can be downright confusing.

For example, you're probably aware that some Bill Mar and Thorn Apple Valley hot dogs and deli meats were recently recalled.

Well, last week, I read something that said that as an added precaution, people can heat deli meat (to steaming hot) to kill bacteria. But when exactly should you do that? Should you heat up the entire package as soon as you bring it home from the grocery store, then put it in your fridge for later use?

Or, should you heat up a slice or two right before making a sandwich?

Also last week, I heard on the news that Consumer Reports magazine had done a study that showed grapes and other fruits and vegetables typically have high concentrations of pesticides, but that washing the produce solves the problem.

But how does one effectively wash produce? For example, I know a lady who insists on washing her fruits and vegetables with dish soap and a brush.

I've wondered about other things, too. Like which is better for cleaning up kitchen messes - paper towels or dish cloths?

And, can a kitchen sponge be disinfected by heating it in a microwave? (Someone I know claims the practice works.)

And, do you have to rinse chicken before cooking it? (My mom always did.)

For the answers to these and other questions, I spoke with Susan Conley, food safety education liaison for both the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta and the Partnership for Food Safety Education in Washington, D.C.

Founded in 1996, the public-private Partnership includes the CDC, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), seven food trade associations and other government and consumer agencies.

Its mission is to reduce the incidence of food-borne illness by educating Americans about safe handling practices.

Here's what Conley had to say:

Cook hot dogs until steaming hot, but if you're a healthy adult or child, don't worry about heating deli meat.

Healthy people rarely get listeria, the disease connected to deli meat bacteria.

But if you're pregnant or have a weakened immune system, "I would avoid deli products all together, just to be on the safe side," Conley said.

That's because listeria can cause miscarriages and stillbirths among pregnant women, and serious and sometimes fatal infections in people with weakened immune systems, including infants, the frail and elderly, chemotherapy patients and individuals suffering from chronic diseases.

Don't use soap to wash fruits and vegetables.

The practice hasn't been approved by the FDA or the Environmental Protection Agency for that purpose. Just scrub them with a soft bristle brush or your hand under cold, running water. Friction helps clean produce.

Also, you're not necessarily better off peeling apples "because there's a lot of fiber in the skin, which is good for you," Conley said.

Paper towels are best for cleaning kitchen messes because you throw the germs away. Dish cloths are OK, but don't use the same one for more than a day and get a fresh one after wiping up juices from raw meat.

Microwaving a sponge doesn't kill bacteria and you don't have to rinse chicken - just make sure you cook it to the proper temperature.

For more information about food safety and food recalls, call the USDA's meat and poultry hotline at 1-800-635-4555. The FDA's food hotline is 1-800-332-4010. Visit the Partnership for Food Safety Education's web site at <http://www.fightbac.org>.



Par for style

Local designer updates women's golf garb



STAFF PHOTO BY JIM ANDREWS

A hole in one: Local designer and Birmingham resident Karen McCarty immediately recognized a void in the market after taking up golf three years ago. Locating stylish clothing suitable for the golf course was tough to do, so she started designing, marketing and selling her own collection. McCarty's Sugar Mag golf, sport and pool side line for 1999 was recently picked up by Nordstrom stores on the West Coast.

BY NICOLE STAFFORD

STAFF WRITER

nstafford@cc.homecomm.net

Long, flattering lines.

High-tech fabrics.

Modern designs.

Not the attributes of typical women's golf apparel, but they may be once Birmingham designer Karen McCarty's pieces hit the department store racks.

In fact, the 28-year-old designer's 1999 spring-line for golf and pool side - her logo is Sugar Mag - has been picked up by Nordstrom's west coast stores.

"The construction and the designs themselves are very current... It's fresh, it's needed and it's innovative," said McCarty, whose clothing is scheduled to appear in the first annual Plant Golf Celebrity Gala's fashion show on March 12 at the Novi Expo Center.

A benefit for the Michigan chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the fashion show starts at 9:30 p.m. and coincides with a silent auction and \$5,000 putting contest. (Tickets are \$25, include an open bar and can be obtained by calling (800) 247-7382.)

McCarty, who grew up in Birmingham and is a graduate of Seaholm High School, took up golf three years ago and quickly determined that finding stylish, feminine clothing suitable for the golf course was a tough proposition.

With more and more women taking up the sport - and, a significant portion of that population being between the ages of 20 and 35 - McCarty saw a void in the market.

"I just really thought

nobody was providing anything functional - and, I don't mean to sound flaky - for younger people."

After a year of studying the market, McCarty, who has a degree in fashion merchandising from Western Michigan University but no formal design training, started sketching pieces, forging through fabric swatches and ordering samples of her design.

"I think I know what I like. Designing a piece to me is common sense," said the young designer.

Indeed, logic influences McCarty's design, and without sacrificing style.

Her micro-suede, cargo pants, for example, are not only extremely comfortable and functional

but also tailored and feminine.

Available this golf season in navy and vanilla for about \$95, the pants grant freedom of movement and bear an extra-large, side pocket for golf balls, tees and a scorecard.

Similarly, McCarty's sports shorts meet golf course regulations - no shorter than two inches above the knee - but are constructed with a narrow waist band and flat front to flatter the figure.

McCarty's mission - design clothing that woman can comfortably wear off the course as well as on. "There's no point in spending \$200 on a golf outfit, if you can't wear it off the course," she said.

Likewise, McCarty plans to design future collections with prior ones in mind, so customers can build wardrobes for playing golf instead of purchasing new outfits every season.

"We're still getting there," said McCarty. "Two years ago I felt like I was trying to create a wave, a movement, and there wasn't much excitement about it. Now, I think, not only can we say we created it, but we can ride it."

In Michigan, Sugar Mag clothing is currently available at Mettler's, a resort apparel store with locations in Petoskey, Charlevoix and Harbor Springs. Product information can also be obtained by calling (248) 594-9255.



Swinging pants: Golf wear that is comfortable and stylish.



Sleek shorts: McCarty hopes to create golf apparel that women can wear anywhere.

News of special events for shoppers is included in this calendar. Send information to: Malls & Mainstreets, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 East Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009; or fax (248) 644-1314. Deadline: Wednesday 5 p.m. for publication on Sunday.

TUESDAY, MARCH 2

NEW MILLENNIUM

Figaro beauty salon in Birmingham has gathered a panel of experts who will address health and beauty questions with an eye towards the new millennium. Plastic and laser surgery, mind-body fitness, nutrition, stress management and massage therapy will be the topics of discussion, 7-9 p.m., 265 N. Old Woodward. To reserve a seat, call (248) 723-7990.

THURSDAY, MARCH 4

SPRING DKNY

Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Collection in Troy,

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

presents DKNY's spring 1999 collection. Informal modeling is 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served at 5 p.m. followed by a fashion presentation at 6 p.m. Individual wardrobe consultations are available 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 5. Call (248) 614-3347. DKNY Boutique, first floor.

SATURDAY, MARCH 6

SPRING FOR MEN

The Armani Le Collezioni trunk show of men's spring clothing will be on view at Neiman Marcus, Somerset Collection in Troy from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Man's Store, first floor.

KID'S SEWING

Haberman Fabrics, at 117 W. Fourth Street in Royal Oak, offers beginning sewing instruction for kids, ages 10-14, from 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Class runs three Saturdays through March 20 and costs \$40. Students will make pillows. For information, call (248) 541-0010.

BRIDAL SHOW

Jacobson's at Laurel Park Place in Livonia presents a fashion show of looks for the bride and mother of the bride, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. in the Dress Department. Fashion show begins at 11 a.m.

TRENDS FOR WOMEN

Hudson's tenders a spring trend seminar that features the use of six wardrobe pieces. Hudson's, Somerset Collection in Troy, 1 p.m., Oval Room. Hudson's, Oakland Mall in Troy, 3 p.m., location to be determined.