



# Healthy Aging Update

Iowa Department of Elder Affairs

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## Our Mission:

To provide advocacy, educational, and prevention services to older Iowans so they can find Iowa a healthy, safe, productive, and enjoyable place to live and work.

## Welcome

This issue of Healthy Aging Update continues to provide information on the Dietary Guidelines with a focus on food safety. Additional information is included in this newsletter to serve as a resource for providing nutrition and health promotion services to older adults.

## Food Safety

*The following information on food safety is from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/html/chapter10.htm>

**Overview** Avoiding foods that are contaminated with harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites, toxins, and chemical and physical contaminants are vital for healthful eating. The signs and symptoms of foodborne illness range from gastrointestinal symptoms, such as upset stomach, diarrhea, fever, vomiting, abdominal cramps, and dehydration, to more severe systemic illness, such as paralysis and meningitis. It is estimated that every year about 76 million people in the United States become ill from pathogens in food; of these, about 5,000 die. Consumers can take simple measures to reduce their risk of foodborne illness, especially in the home.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- To avoid microbial foodborne illness:
  - Clean hands, food contact surfaces, and fruits and vegetables. Meat and poultry should *not* be washed or rinsed.
  - Separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing, or storing foods.
  - Cook foods to a safe temperature to kill microorganisms.
  - Chill (refrigerate) perishable food promptly and defrost foods properly.
  - Avoid raw (unpasteurized) milk or any products made from unpasteurized milk, raw or partially cooked eggs or foods containing raw eggs, raw or undercooked meat and poultry, unpasteurized juices, and raw sprouts.

### Key Recommendations for Specific Population Groups

- *Infants and young children, pregnant women, older adults, and those who are immunocompromised.* Do not eat or drink raw (unpasteurized) milk or any products made from unpasteurized milk, raw or partially cooked eggs or foods containing raw eggs, raw or undercooked meat and poultry, raw or undercooked fish or shellfish, unpasteurized juices, and raw sprouts.
- *Pregnant women, older adults, and those who are immunocompromised:* Only eat certain deli meats and frankfurters that have been reheated to steaming hot.

The most important food safety problem is microbial foodborne illness. All those who handle food, including farmers, food producers, individuals who work in markets and food service establishments, and other food preparers, have a responsibility to keep food as safe as possible. To keep food safe, people who prepare food should clean hands, food contact surfaces, and fruits and vegetables; separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods; cook foods to a safe internal temperature; chill perishable food promptly; and defrost food properly. For more important information on cooking, cleaning, separating, and chilling, see [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org).

When preparing and consuming food, it is essential to wash hands often, particularly before and after preparing food, especially after handling raw meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood. A good hand washing protocol includes wetting hands; applying soap; rubbing hands vigorously together for 20 seconds; rinsing hands thoroughly under clean, running warm water; and drying hands completely using a clean disposable or cloth towel.

Washing may be the only method that consumers have to reduce pathogen load on fresh produce that will not be either peeled or subsequently cooked. A good protocol for washing fresh fruits and vegetables includes removing and discarding outer leaves, washing produce just before cooking or eating, washing under running potable water, scrubbing with a clean brush or with hands, and drying the fruits or vegetables using a clean disposable or cloth towel. Free moisture on produce may promote survival and growth of microbial populations. Therefore, drying the food is critical if the item will not be eaten or cooked right away.

People should read the labels of bagged produce to determine if it is ready-to-eat. Ready-to-eat, pre-washed bagged produce can be used without further washing if kept refrigerated and used by the "use-by" date. If desired, pre-washed, ready-to-eat produce can be washed again.

Raw meat and poultry should not be washed because this creates the danger of cross-contamination and is not necessary. Washing these foods can allow most bacteria that are present on the surface of the meat or poultry to spread to ready-to-eat foods, kitchen utensils, and counter surfaces.

It is important to separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing, or storing. This prevents cross-contamination from one food to another. In addition, refrigerator surfaces can become contaminated from high-risk foods such as raw meats, poultry, fish, uncooked hot dogs, certain deli meats, or raw vegetables. If not cleaned, contaminated refrigerator surfaces can, in turn, serve as a vehicle for contaminating other foods.

Uncooked and undercooked meat, poultry and eggs and egg products are potentially unsafe. Raw meat, poultry and eggs should always be cooked to a safe internal temperature (see sidebar). The best way to tell if meat, poultry and egg dishes are cooked safely is to use a food thermometer. Leftover refrigerator foods should also be reheated to the proper internal temperature. Bacteria grow most rapidly in the range of 40°F and 140°F. To keep food out of this danger zone, keep cold food cold (below 40°F) and hot food hot (above 140°F). Sidebar provides information for temperature rules for proper cooking and food handling. Proper cooking makes most uncooked foods safe.

The refrigerator should be set at no higher than 40°F and the freezer at 0°F, and these temperatures should be checked with an appliance thermometer. Refrigerated leftovers may become unsafe within 3 to 4 days. Despite the appearance of a food, it may not be safe to eat. Not all bacterial growth causes a food's surface to discolor or smell bad. It may be unsafe to taste fresh or leftover food items when there is any doubt about their safety. Safe disposal of the food is



180°F Whole poultry  
170°F Poultry breasts  
165°F Stuffing, ground poultry, reheat leftovers  
160°F Meats (medium), egg dishes, pork, and ground meats  
145°F Beef steaks, roast, veal, lamb (medium rare)  
140°F Hold hot foods  
DANGER ZONE  
40°F Refrigerator temperatures  
0°F Freezer temperatures

indicated if there is a question about whether or not a food is safe to eat. "If in doubt—throw it out."

### Considerations for Specific Population Groups

Some people may be at high risk for developing foodborne illness. These include pregnant women and their fetuses, young children, older adults, people with weakened immune systems, and individuals with certain chronic illnesses. These people should pay extra attention to food safety advice.

For example, pregnant women, older adults, and those who are immunocompromised are at risk of developing listeriosis, a potentially life-threatening illness caused by the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. Some deli meats and frankfurters that have not been reheated to steaming hot and some ready-to-eat foods are associated with listeriosis and pose a high-risk to certain individuals. All these foods should be heated to a safe internal temperature. In addition, these individuals should take special care not to eat or drink raw (unpasteurized) milk or any products made from unpasteurized milk (such as some soft cheeses), raw or partially cooked eggs or foods containing raw eggs, raw or undercooked meat and poultry, unpasteurized juices, and raw sprouts. They should also avoid raw or undercooked fish or shellfish.

New information on food safety is constantly emerging. Recommendations and precautions for people at high risk are updated as scientists learn more about preventing foodborne illness. Individuals in high-risk categories should seek guidance from a healthcare provider. In addition, up-to-date information is available at the Government's food safety website at [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov).

### Safe cooking and holding temperatures for foods.

Bacteria multiply rapidly between 40°F and 140°F, doubling in number in as little as 20 minutes. To keep food out of this danger zone, keep cold food cold and hot food hot. Keep cold food in the refrigerator, in coolers, or on the service line on ice. Set your refrigerator no higher than 40°F and the freezer at 0°F. Keep hot food in the oven, in heated chafing dishes, or in preheated steam tables, warming trays, and/or slow cookers. Use a clean thermometer that measures the internal temperature of cooked food to make sure meat, poultry, and casseroles are cooked to the temperature as indicated in the figure.

## Reducing the Risks of Foodborne Listeria

*The following information about Listeria is from "Special Handling for Ready-to-Eat, Refrigerated Foods" booklet from the Department of Health & Human Services and United States Department of Agriculture.*

Listeria is a foodborne bacterial that grows at refrigerator temperatures, and it causes listeriosis, an illness that can be particularly harmful for older adults and other individuals with weakened immune systems. The good news is there are some simple ways to reduce risk for listeriosis.

- Keep the refrigerator at 40°F or below.
- Use ready-to-eat, refrigerated foods as soon as possible.
- Clean the refrigerator regularly.

### What is Listeria monocytogenes?

It's a harmful bacterium that causes a foodborne illness called listeriosis. It's found in the environment- soil, water, decaying vegetation, and the intestinal tract of animals. Listeria can grow at refrigerator temperatures, whereas most other foodborne bacterial do not. If food is processed, packaged, or handled in unsanitary conditions, it can become contaminated with Listeria. This is of particular concern because most ready-to-eat refrigerated foods are not reheated before eating—a step that would kill Listeria, if it were in the food.

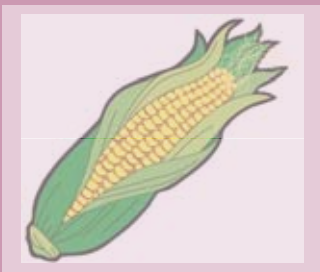


Additional food safety resources can be accessed at [www.fightbac.org/](http://www.fightbac.org/)

## Tips for avoiding Listeria

Do not eat:

- Hot dogs and lunchmeat- unless they're reheated until steaming hot.
- Soft cheeses, such as Feta, Brie, and Camembert, "blue-veined cheeses" or "queso blanco", "queso fresco", or Panela- unless they're made with pasteurized milk.
- Refrigerated pates or meat spreads- canned or shelf stable are okay to eat.
- Refrigerated smoked seafood- unless it's in a cooked dish, such as a casserole. Canned or shelf-stable smoked seafood are okay to eat.
- Foods that contain unpasteurized milk.



Good manufacturing and handling practices must be followed during food processing and at retail in order to prevent contamination. That is why government agencies monitor food and inspect processing plants, grocery stores, and restaurants regularly to ensure that the food supply is safe.

Listeria will grow in the refrigerator, and it will grow faster at refrigerator temperatures above 40°F. The longer ready-to-eat, refrigerated foods are stored in the refrigerator, the more time Listeria has to grow. Listeria can spread from one food to another through spills in the refrigerator.

To reduce your risk for listeriosis, it's important to use an appliance thermometer made specifically for use in a refrigerator or freezer. For safety, it is important to verify the temperature of refrigerators and freezers. Refrigerators should maintain a temperature no higher than 40°F. Frozen food will hold its top quality for the longest possible time when the freezer maintains 0°F.

### What are the symptoms of listeriosis?

The symptoms can take a few days or even weeks to appear and may include fever, chills, muscle aches, nausea, and diarrhea or upset stomach. If infection spreads to the nervous system, then headaches, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance or convulsions can occur.

Healthy adults and children occasionally get infected with Listeria, but rarely become seriously ill. However, for people in at-risk groups, listeriosis can be particularly harmful.

### What's the general treatment for listeriosis?

A healthcare provider may perform a blood test to check for listeriosis. Antibiotics may be prescribed by a health care provider to get rid of infection.

### Why older adults face special risks?

Immune systems weaken as people age, which makes it harder for the body to fight off disease. Older adults often suffer from chronic health conditions, which make them more susceptible to foodborne illness. In addition, poor nutrition and poor blood circulation may result in a weakened immune system. Additionally, stomach acid decreases as people get older, and stomach acid plays an important role in reducing the number of bacteria in our intestinal tracts and the risk of illness.

## The American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry Releases Principles of Care for Patients with Dementia Due to Alzheimer's Disease.

The American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry (AAGP) released its position statement on principles of care for patients with dementia due to Alzheimer's disease (AD). This paper addresses the non-cognitive neuropsychiatric symptoms associated with dementia such as agitation, aggression, delusions, etc. and the non-pharmacologic interventions and pharmacologic therapies to manage them. Also included are interventions targeted towards supportive care to patients. This section provides a minimal checklist of issues to be addressed with patients, which includes: safety matters; day-to-day living structure; general medical health monitoring; and advanced care planning. Another section addresses supportive care to caregivers by providing a minimal checklist of issues to be addressed with caregivers, including: educating caregivers; teaching problem solving skills; accessing resources; long-range planning; emotional support; and respite. To review AAGP's position statement, visit:

[http://www.aagponline.org/prof/position\\_caredmnalz.asp](http://www.aagponline.org/prof/position_caredmnalz.asp)

## Community Health Needs Assessment and Health Improvement Plan

Public health agencies regularly analyze and make available information on the health of the community, including statistics on health status, community health needs, and epidemiologic and other studies of health problems. The Community Health Needs Assessment and Health Improvement Plan (CHNA & HIP) is a public health initiative that enables communities across Iowa to assure the health of their citizens through the development of a comprehensive report on leading health indicators, health priorities and health improvement plans. The assessment process is an ongoing process to ensure changes in public health needs are identified and addressed in a timely manner. Through this ongoing process, Area Agencies on Aging have the opportunity to advocate for the needs of older adults. Information about county CHNA & HIP can be accessed via a new map at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/chnahip/default.asp>

## Resources

### Food Safety

- Latest Listeria news, fact sheets, consumer information, resources, procedures, and guidance on foodborne illness from FSIS. Includes "Ask Karen", the FSIS virtual representative who answers food safety questions 24/7. [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov)
- "Food Safety for Home Cooking" at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/> provides access to a mix-and-match downloadable MyPyramid resources with two food safety presentations (PowerPoints, handouts, etc.).

### Health Promotion

- **Vitamin D Status and Falls.** Poor vitamin D status has been found to be linked with an increased risk of recurrent falls in older adults. Older adults, particularly those between the ages of 65 to 74 years, with poor vitamin D status are at an increased risk of falling. Based on these findings, regular assessment of the vitamin D status is encouraged. Snijder MB, van Schoor NM, et al, J Clin Endocrinol Metab, 2006 May 9.
- **Nutrition and Frailty in Older Adults.** In a study of 802 older adults, low intakes of calories and selected nutrients were associated with frailty. Those who had at least two of the following criteria were defined as frail: low muscle strength, feeling of exhaustion, low walking speed, and reduced physical activity. The study showed that low daily calorie intake was significantly associated with frailty as was low protein, vitamin D, vitamin E, vitamin C, and folate intakes. When low intakes of more than 3 nutrients occurred, the odds for frailty increased. Thus, this study suggests that low intakes of energy, folate, protein, and vitamins D, C, and E, are independently associated with frailty in older subjects. Bartali B, Frongillo EA, et al, J Gerontol A Biol Sci Med Sci., 2006; 61(6): 589-93.
- **Pick a Better Snack Materials.** Check out this site for nutrition resources from the Pick a Better Snack Program. [www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabettersnack/](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabettersnack/). Under the social marketing campaign you will find news articles and recipes that are handy to use. The older adult section will connect you to the Chef Charles newsletters and instructor's guides (these guides have lots of quick/easy nutrition lessons).
- **Medicare Preventive Services.** Medicare has a campaign to inform beneficiaries how they can use expanded preventive services. This secure online service provides registered users with access to their personal Medicare

information along with the preventive services. The focus on preventive services is designed to reduce the high cost of treating chronic illnesses. Visit <http://My.Medicare.gov> website.

- Statehealthfacts.org has updated data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on total Medicare enrollment for 2005 for all states and the nation. Data on Medicare service use by service type include: short-stay hospital, hospital outpatient, skilled nursing facility, hospice, physician and supplier, and home health. Statehealthfacts.org provides free, up-to-date, and easy-to-use health data on all 50 states, covering more than 500 health topics. [www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?](http://www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?)

### Emergency Preparedness

- Just in Case: Emergency Readiness for Older Adult and Caregivers (12 page Factsheet, Checklist and video). [www.aginginstride.org/www.aginginstride.org/emergencyprep/docs/Just\\_in\\_Case.pdf](http://www.aginginstride.org/www.aginginstride.org/emergencyprep/docs/Just_in_Case.pdf)
- "Hanging cards to help S. Florida seniors get aid after hurricanes," by Diane C. Lade (\_South Florida Sun-Sentinel\_ [Fort Lauderdale], Jun. 14, 2006). <http://tinyurl.com/f7qa7>

### Articles of Interest

- Lower literacy means poor health and poor health care access for older people" (Eurekalert [American Association for the Advancement of Science], May 26, 2006). [www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2006-05/uoc--llm052506.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2006-05/uoc--llm052506.php)
- "Rural life may be a plus for elderly," by Tom Long (\_St. Louis Post-Dispatch\_, May 30, 2006). <http://tinyurl.com/r72yh>
- "Depression in elderly often undetected," by Jane E. Brody (\_New York Times\_ via \_InternatiMajor changes coming for graying workforce," by Annemarie Franczyk (\_MSNBC.com\_, June 11, 2006). <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/13269138/>
- "Hospital avoidable for some elderly with pneumonia," Karla Gale (Reuters Health, June 9, 2006). [www.reutershealth.com/archive/2006/06/09/eline/links/20060609elin036.html](http://www.reutershealth.com/archive/2006/06/09/eline/links/20060609elin036.html)
- "Activity kits help Alzheimer's patients," by Karen Shideler (\_Wichita [Kansas] Eagle\_, Jun. 15, 2006). [www.kansas.com/mld/kansas/news/local/14818935.htm](http://www.kansas.com/mld/kansas/news/local/14818935.htm)
- "Body Mass Index and Up-to-Date Colorectal Cancer Screening Among Marylanders Aged 50 Years and Older," (CDC Preventing Chronic Disease E Journal, July 2006) [www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2006/jul/05\\_0178.htm?s\\_cid=pcd33a88\\_e](http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2006/jul/05_0178.htm?s_cid=pcd33a88_e)
- "Study finds hydration lacking in older adults" (Eurekalert [American Association for the Advancement of Science], Jun. 26, 2006). [www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2006-06/tgso-sfh062606.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2006-06/tgso-sfh062606.php)
- "Recipe for a ripe old age: fruit and veg, exercise, no smoking," by Sarah Boseley (\_The Guardian\_ [London], April 26, 2006). [www.guardian.co.uk/uk\\_news/story/0,,1761337,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,,1761337,00.html)
- "Weight loss reduces frailty in obese older adults," by Megan Rauscher (Reuters Health, April 25, 2006). [www.reutershealth.com/archive/2006/04/25/eline/links/20060425elin004.html](http://www.reutershealth.com/archive/2006/04/25/eline/links/20060425elin004.html)

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*If you are interested in  
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the healthy aging  
updates, contact Erin  
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- "Lifestyle Changes Can Help Older Hispanics Manage Diabetes" (Apr. 18, 2006). [www.nia.nih.gov/NewsAndEvents/PressReleases/PR20060418diabeteshispanics.htm](http://www.nia.nih.gov/NewsAndEvents/PressReleases/PR20060418diabeteshispanics.htm)  
[http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2006-06/jaaj-cbt062206.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2006-06/jaaj-cbt062206.php)
- Osteoarthritis numbers expected to soar. Arthritis already costs the U.S. more than \$86.2 billion in lost productivity, and the problem is only expected to get worse in coming years as the population ages. The number of arthritis cases is expected to increase by nearly 40% by 2030; osteoarthritis already affects about half of people age 65 and older. (USA Today, June 19, 2006) [http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2006-06-18-osteoarthritis\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2006-06-18-osteoarthritis_x.htm)
- "Maturity Health Matters: FDA Health News for Older Adults, Their Families and Caregivers," (Issue No. 2, Spring 2006). This online newsletter is about FDA regulated products for older adults, their families and caregivers. It focuses on FDA approved products that help people live longer, more productive lives. The current issue's included information on \*iBOT 4000 (climbing) wheelchair \*recent problems with soft contact lens solutions and infections \*shingles \*vaccines \*filling prescriptions abroad \*being an active member of your healthcare team\*Baxter's infusion pump recall \*trans fats \*nutrition tips \*MedWatch - FDA's Safety Information and Adverse Event Reporting Program. <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/maturityhealthmatters/issue2.html>

## Example of Pick-a-Better Snack news article

\* see Pick a better snack materials under Health Promotion

### Pick a **better** snack *On the Go – With Honeydew Melon!*

A cool slice of honeydew melon hits the spot on a hot summer day, and summer is the ripe time to get the cream of this California crop. These light green, juicy melons are packed with vitamin C and are a good source of potassium.

Thought to have originated in Persia, these sweet members of the muskmelon family were prized by ancient Egyptians thousands of years ago. Luckily for American honeydew enthusiasts, the melons are now grown in California and parts of the Southwest.

Honeydew melons should have a creamy yellow rind and a slightly green color with a slightly soft blossom end. Choose well shaped melons that are heavy for their size, have a distinct and pleasant aroma and are free of bruises, dents, or cracks. Honeydew melons do not ripen further after harvest. Refrigerate melons after cutting.

### Wash. Cut. Eat (how easy is that?)

#### Take Honeydew Melon With You!

- Staying inside where it's cool to watch the PGA championship this week? Snack on fresh honeydew melon balls while you watch the experts sink their putts.
- Melon slices taste great with fat-free cottage cheese or other fresh fruit.
- Celebrate National Inventors Month with a honeydew snack creation contest. Add other fruits, cheeses and snack foods such as pretzels to spark creativity.

