

Food Safety

HELPFUL HINTS FROM EXPERTS

Avoid Food Fiascos During Your Festivities: Tips for Entertaining

(NAPSA)—According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are more than 76 million cases of food-borne illness in the United States each year. Hosting parties and family gatherings is a time to enjoy loved ones, but between greeting guests, taking coats and handing out drinks, food preparation can get lost in the shuffle. To prevent food poisoning when entertaining, use measurement tools to ensure that foods are cooked thoroughly and stored correctly. Follow these food safety tips to help ensure happy and healthy guests:

Safe Cooking

Undercooked meat and poultry are common causes of food poisoning. These foods should be cooked to an internal temperature high enough to destroy any harmful bacteria that may exist in the food. Although many believe that meat color can be used to determine if foods are completely cooked, color and texture indicators are unreliable. Using a food thermometer is the only sure way to know if food has reached a high enough temperature to destroy food-borne bacteria. Companies such as Taylor Precision Products emphasize the importance of food safety by providing educational information and USDA guidelines on all of their packaging. NSF-certified instruments like Taylor's TempRite thermometers, available at Wal-Mart, ensure that every dish is cooked correctly.

The USDA recommends cooking ground beef mixtures to 160° F on a meat thermometer. However, whole muscle meats, such as steaks and roasts, may be cooked



from 145° F–170° F, depending on doneness preference. Poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165° F throughout.

Cooling And Storing

Hosts typically prepare too much food for their event and storing leftovers in the refrigerator and freezer is a common end-of-party ritual. For safety, it is important to verify the temperature of refrigerators and freezers. Refrigerators should maintain a temperature no higher than 40° F and frozen foods will remain protected when the freezer remains at 0°F. Taylor's TempRite Freezer-Refrigerator thermometer helps monitor these temperatures, providing an accurate reading from 30° F to 90° F that can be critical in the event of a power outage. When the power resumes, if the refrigerator is 40° F or colder and the freezer is still colder than 40° F, then the food is safe.

No matter the number of people or the occasion, the main goal of any party is to relax and have fun. By following important safety guidelines and using the proper tools, cooking can be a piece of cake. For more food safety tips, visit www.taylorusa.com.