

Help For Hosts: Don't Let Food Poisoning Spoil Your Party

(NAPSA)—As every host knows, food can make a party—but it shouldn't also make you sick. Keep foodborne illness from spoiling your fun by following a few easy tips from the American Dietetic Association/ConAgra Foods Foundation *Home Food Safety...It's in Your Hands™* program.

Beat The Buffet Blues

From first guest to last, a good party can often last for hours on end. But eating foods that have been left unrefrigerated for more than two hours can lead to a case of the “buffet blues”—also known as foodborne illness.

“Keep guests out of harm’s way by setting out buffet items in two-hour shifts—that’s about the length of time as two CDs played back-to-back,” advises Jackie Newgent, registered dietitian and national spokesperson for the ADA/ConAgra Foods *Home Food Safety...It's in Your Hands™* program. “After each shift, place uneaten food back in the refrigerator—set at below 40 degrees Fahrenheit—and replenish the buffet or dinner table with fresh favorites.”

Mind Your Manners

It's true: 38 percent of Americans say they “double dip” at parties! (That means they dip a chip or vegetable into a bowl of dip or salsa, bite off half and then dip



again.) “When it comes to dipping, one time is enough,” says Newgent.

Avoid Fruit Faux Pas

A festive drink may not be complete without a colorful garnish of lime or orange. But beware: One in four hosts say they don't always wash fruit to remove harmful bacteria before adding it to your drink. In addition to washing ready-to-eat fruits like pears and plums, it's also important to wash fruits with skin you don't eat such as limes, oranges and lemons to eliminate harmful bacteria that can spread during peeling or cutting.

Reheat Right

Eating leftovers from a get-together can be just as much fun as the party itself. And while some (60 percent) eat their repeat feasts cold straight from the fridge, most of us prefer to reheat foods in the

microwave/oven (73 percent). However you decide to reinvent your party platter, take steps to help ensure it's as safe as it is delicious: Always reheat leftover foods to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit (use a meat thermometer to check) and be sure to throw out leftovers in a timely manner. Not sure how long your leftovers can keep? For a quick reference, download your own copy of the Refrigerator Calculator available at www.homefoodsafety.org. The printer-friendly chart lists popular leftovers along with each food's recommended shelf-life.

More Help For Party Planners

The ADA/ConAgra Foods *Home Food Safety...It's in Your Hands™* program educates consumers that home food safety is a serious issue and provides solutions so Americans can easily and safely handle food in their own kitchens. This program complements government-sponsored food safety initiatives that speak to the leading critical food-handling violations by emphasizing the following four key messages: 1) Wash hands often; 2) Keep raw meats and ready-to-eat foods separate; 3) Cook to proper temperatures; 4) Refrigerate promptly below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

For more information, visit www.homefoodsafety.org.