SWEET 16 RULES FOR SAFE FOOD

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In an attempt to limit the threat of food borne illness follow these SWEET 16 RULES FOR SAFE FOOD

1. Clean hands. There are numerous reports that indicate hand contact may be a major source of food contamination. Keep hands clean. Wash hands for about 20 seconds using soap and warm water. This does appear to create problems while we are camping since we often have limited water on some camp outs. A good clean barrier between hands and food will prevent contamination, such as plastic gloves, a washed plastic bag such as the one you receive your newspaper in or that we put our fruits and vegetables in from the supermarket. The key here is keeping the food clean and away from dirty hands.
2. Planning – Plan your meals for camp outs so you know what will be eaten, when it will be cooked, how it will be stored until cooking, how it will be prepared, and how the waste will be handled.
3. Clean Hands – Wash hands, utensils, plates, and all areas after contact with raw meat or poultry and before contact with other foods.
4. Acquisition of foods – when should we purchase foods for camp outs? Most perishable foods should be purchased no sooner than the day prior to or the day of camp out. The rule to follow is if the food is not to be eaten within three (3) days of purchase, freeze the food. Frozen meat, for example, helps keep other foods cold until consumption.
5. CLEAN HANDS – Wash hands and do not let raw meats or poultry or their juices come in contact with other foods.
6. Storage – Perishable foods should be stored at or below 40° F. Keeping the coolers at the proper temperature may take some effort. When we are camping coolers with ice, ice gels, frozen jugs of water, or frozen food can aid to maintain a cold environment. One hint would be to keep drinks in one cooler and perishables in a separate cooler and cover the coolers so they are out of the direct sunlight. Try to open the lids on the coolers only as needed to help maintain as cold a temperature as possible
7. CLEAN HANDS
8. Preparation of food – the best general rule is to prepare foods so that the meats, poultry and/or fish are always prepared last. This helps prevent contamination of the cutting boards, knives or utensils.
9. CLEAN HANDS
10. Temperature – Make sure that all meat is cooked and is at the proper temperature. Just to simplify things make sure that meats, poultry and fish are cooked to an internal temperature of 165° F and if you have a food that is to be dept hot, it needs to be maintained at 140° F or above. When in doubt heat some more. The heating will kill the bacteria responsible for food borne illness.
11. CLEAN HANDS

12. Cleanup – Bleach is probably the best sanitizer we can use. When washing dishes after a meal a) after scraping dishes, b) wash in HOT soapy water, c) Rinse in clean hot water, and d) sanitize with a lukewarm bleach solution. A solution of between 50 and 200 parts per billion of chlorine. This can be easily done by using an eye dropper bottle. It takes about 6 drops of household laundry bleach to a 1.2 gallon of water to get the proper solution.
13. CLEAN HANDS
14. Waste – Make sure that all food and other solid waste is carried out of camp and disposed of properly. Lets continue to leave our campsites cleaner than we found them.
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