

# TIPS FOR FOOD SAFETY EDUCATORS

## How You Can Help Promote Thermy™



The purpose of the Thermy™ campaign is to focus public attention on the importance of using a food thermometer when cooking to help prevent foodborne illness. Visual indicators are not reliable. Using a food thermometer is the only way to ensure that food has been cooked to a safe temperature. Listed below are some ideas we hope will be helpful in bringing the Thermy™ message to your community. Use some of these ideas, expand on them, or try your own. Also think about extending your reach by partnering with other food safety educators in your community.

### GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT TO WHERE PEOPLE ARE

Shopping malls, supermarkets, senior and community centers, schools and libraries, daycare centers, county or state fairs, health fairs, community and youth organizations, recreational events, hospitals, and HMO's are good places for promoting Thermy™.

- 1** Set up a Thermy™ exhibit in a shopping mall, supermarket, community center, county or state fair, or at a health fair. Offer cooking demonstrations on how to use food thermometers in different foods. Partner with a youth, student, or community organization to staff the exhibit and distribute Thermy™ information.
- 2** Place free Thermy™ brochures at different locations in your community—in local libraries, and senior and community centers.
- 3** Speak to senior groups about the special importance of food safety for older persons. Also about how food thermometers have changed and improved—there are many more out there than the large dial thermometer that they might be using. Remind them that while they might have relied on visual indicators in the past, they are not reliable. They must take extra care when preparing foods because of their heightened susceptibility to severe foodborne illness as a result of age or underlying chronic conditions.
- 4** Mail Thermy™ materials to daycare center directors. Remind them that infants and young children are at higher risk for foodborne illness because their immune systems are not fully developed. Encourage them to reproduce and distribute these materials to parents or use the information in center newsletters.
- 5** Encourage local elementary schools to hold a Thermy™ day featuring kids cooking with local chefs showing the importance of using a food thermometer. Contact your local chapter of the American Culinary Federation's Chef and Child Foundation for chefs who volunteer in schools. Offer poster and essay contests on the importance of using a food thermometer. Give out Thermy™ awards. Invite parents to demonstrate with their children the importance of cooking to safe temperatures and using a food thermometer. Print Thermy™ stickers or create other give-aways to excite children and encourage their participation.
- 6** Contact local middle and high school home economics teachers and science teachers about including Thermy™ and the use of food thermometers in their curriculum. Encourage cooking experiments/demonstrations to show how unreliable visual indicators and personal experience are and how easy it is to use a food thermometer. A good example on how to conduct this experiment is in the Fight BAC!™ curriculum, "Your Game Plan for Food Safety,"

from the Partnership for Food Safety Education. For this experiment and others, order or download the curriculum from their Web site ([www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org)).

**7** Ask about getting Thermym™, a costumed character mascot, at your local events!

## GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT THROUGH THE MEDIA

Television, radio, and print media are an effective way of getting food safety information before large numbers of people. Typically, local media want to be involved with the communities they serve, especially regarding health issues.

**1** Distribute the public service announcement to television and radio stations in your community and ask that they broadcast it at various times of the day and all through the year.

**2** Contact local consumer reporters to get them to promote the use of food thermometers and the Thermym™ character and message. Encourage them to air the public service announcement during their broadcast.

**3** Send the news feature and the reproducible Thermym™ artwork and print ads to local newspapers, journals, and magazines with a request that they promote Thermym™ and the importance of using food thermometers. Inquire about a special newspaper insert or supplement. Some papers will print one supplement free per month for various causes, while others will sell ad space in the supplement to offset printing costs.

**4** Advertise Thermym™ on your local food channel, having the message, "It's Safe to Bite When the Temperature is Right!", scrolled (words moving across the bottom of the screen) and include messages about food safety. Local food retailers may be interested in sponsoring the messages. Contact the local cable TV station's advertising staff early to negotiate a rate, create the text, and produce the message.

**5** Use the cable access channel in your area to promote thermometer use. Create a segment on food safety and using food thermometers. These programs are often aired repeatedly over a long period of time.

**6** Partner with local newspapers and grocery stores to sponsor the following events for elementary and middle school students:

- spelling contests using words related to food safety, food thermometers, and foodborne illness;
- essay contests on the message, "It's Safe to Bite When the Temperature is Right!";
- coloring contests; and
- poster contests.

Submit entries to the newspaper or store. Display entries in school cafeterias and homerooms or in grocery stores. Contest winners (and their entries) get their picture in the newspaper. Give prizes to the winners.

**7** Many newspapers have sections targeted to children. Work with dailies or weeklies in your area to feature Thermym™ and children's food safety materials in their Kids Pages.

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For more information on using Thermym™, see "Guidelines for Use of Thermym™ Art and Educational Materials" or contact us.

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