

# Ideas to Promote National Food Safety Education Month<sup>SM</sup>

The purpose of National Food Safety Education Month<sup>SM</sup> (NFSEM) is to focus public attention on foodborne illness and the safe food handling practices consumers can follow to stay healthy. You may already be involved in similar or related education and information activities that are ongoing throughout the year, but we hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to expand your program to include NFSEM and this year's theme, *Cook It Safely*.

Listed below are some NFSEM promotions that we hope will be helpful. We have included in this *Planning Guide* some reproducible tools to help you bring the NFSEM message to your community: media materials and food safety information, suggested activities, logos, and art work. All of these tools are available at the Web site [www.FoodSafety.gov/September](http://www.FoodSafety.gov/September). Borrow some of these ideas or be creative and try out your own ideas. Also, think about extending your reach by partnering with other food safety educators in your community. Please let us know what you do by completing and sending us the feedback form at the back of this *Guide*.

## Getting the Message Out Where People Are

Shopping malls, supermarkets, senior and community centers, schools and libraries, day care centers, health fairs, community and youth organizations, recreational events, hospitals and HMO's are good places for disseminating NFSEM information.

- 1) Set up an NFSEM exhibit in a shopping mall, supermarket, community center, or at a health fair. Partner with a youth, student, or community organization to staff the exhibit and distribute the copies of the Fight BAC!<sup>TM</sup> brochure, factsheets, and the food safety games you'll find in this *Planning Guide*. Ask a computer retailer to lend equipment to demonstrate how to access NFSEM and other food safety information on the Internet.
- 2) Partner with schools, libraries, and senior and community centers to display and distribute copies of the NFSEM materials in this *Guide*. Where possible, incorporate a computer demonstration of how to access the materials.
- 3) Speak to senior groups about the special importance of food safety for older persons because of their heightened susceptibility to severe foodborne illness as a result of age or underlying chronic conditions.
- 4) Partner with schools in your community to hold coloring contests. Copy the coloring page in this *Guide* or have students visit the Web site: [www.FoodSafety.gov](http://www.FoodSafety.gov) for other Kids pages. Encourage local businesses to reward contest winners with certificates, plaques, or ribbons.
- 5) Arrange for an NFSEM exhibit at health-related local races/walks/bike rides during the month.
- 6) Mail NFSEM materials to daycare center directors and encourage them to reproduce and distribute these materials to parents or use the information in center newsletters.
- 7) Encourage WIC clinic or daycare center directors to hold a cooking demonstration showing the importance of using a thermometer. Invite a local chef from a restaurant or community college. Include partners from the health department or public health students from a university. Sponsor a *Cook It Safely* day, and ask daycare center directors to invite parents of young children to participate. Give away recipes or thermometers to parents and coloring books for children.
- 8) Encourage local elementary schools to hold a "Kids *Cook It Safely*" day featuring kids cooking demonstrations with local chefs showing the importance of safe cooking techniques. 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 with BAC awards on the importance of food safety. Kids generally help out in the kitchen at home. Invite parents to demonstrate with their children the importance of cooking to safe temperatures and using a food thermometer.

- 9) Contact your local or State representative of the National Restaurant Association and talk about how you can work together to celebrate NFSEM.
- 10) Send the NFSEM press release to school foodservice directors, encouraging reproduction and distribution to students to take home as a menu-back to September's breakfast/lunch menus.
- 11) Partner with local Girl Scout/Boy Scout troops to offer a special ribbon, medal, or certificate to scouts involved in activities promoting the NFSEM theme.

## Getting the Message Out Through the Media

Television, radio, and print media are the most 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. Many food-related businesses — e.g., food retailers and restaurants — are already actively involved in NFSEM and are potential sponsors for media initiatives.

- 1) Distribute the public service announcements in this *Guide* to radio stations in your community and ask that they be broadcast at various times of the day during NFSEM.
- 2) Encourage local television stations to use the NFSEM and Fight BAC!™ logos and artwork in this *Guide* or the Web site and use the public service announcements as scripts to promote NFSEM.

- 3) Send the press release and the reproducible NFSEM art work in this guide to local newspapers, journals, and magazines with a request that they cover NFSEM. Inquire about a special newspaper insert or supplement for NFSEM. 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 NFSEM on your local food channel, by having the theme, *Cook It Safely*, scrolled (words moving across the bottom of the screen) and include messages about food safety. Local food retailers or restaurants 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) Partner with local media and businesses to cosponsor:
  - spelling contests for elementary and middle school students using words relating to food safety and foodborne diseases;
  - poster contests, with entries exhibited in school cafeterias or homerooms, and;
  - essay contests on the theme, *Cook It Safely*.All participants could get recognition favors, such as Fight BAC!™ pencils or erasers to "rub out BAC," with winners receiving media recognition, certificates or plaques, and prizes donated by the sponsors.
- 6) In partnership with a local newspaper and a local restaurant, run a coloring contest (BAC coloring page) for children to enter, either by submitting entries to the restaurant or to the newspaper. Entries could be displayed in the restaurant, with prizes for the winners.
- 7) Many newspapers have sections targeted to children. Work with dailies or weeklies in your area to feature NFSEM and the children's food safety materials in this *Guide* in their Kids Pages.