

Sample NFSEM Press Release

For more information, call: _____

Date: _____

September Promotion Emphasizes “Cook It Safely”

(*City, State*) September is National Food Safety Education MonthSM (NFSEM), an annual observance to focus attention on the importance of safe food handling and preparation in both home and commercial kitchens. Created by the foodservice industry in 1995, NFSEM is widely supported by federal, state, and local government agencies, the food industry, and consumer organizations. This year, NFSEM is dedicated to increasing public awareness that an invisible cause of foodborne illness — bacteria — can survive in foods if they are not properly cooked. With *Cook It Safely* as its theme, NFSEM will stress the simple step of cooking to safe temperatures as one of the most effective means of preventing foodborne illness.

According to a 1998 Food and Drug Administration/U.S. Department of Agriculture consumer food survey, most consumers have developed a good foundation of food safety knowledge. However, many are not following safe food handling practices.

- A significant number of people still eat foods, such as raw eggs and rare hamburgers, that increase their chances of foodborne illness.
- Not all consumers understand the importance of cooking foods to the temperatures necessary to ensure that bacteria and other germs are killed.
- Some people still believe that judging doneness by the color of meat is a reliable indicator. A 1998 USDA study on premature browning found that more than 25 percent of hamburgers turn brown before reaching a safe internal temperature.

The fact is that foods are cooked safely when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness.

Here are some helpful tips to *Cook It Safely*:

- Use a clean food thermometer to make sure that meat, poultry, and casseroles reach a safe internal temperature.
- Cook meat and poultry to safe internal temperatures.
 - ground beef 160 °F
 - roasts and steaks 145 °F
 - poultry (chicken breasts) 170 °F
 - whole poultry (turkeys/chickens) 180 °F
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. Don't use recipes in which eggs remain raw or partially cooked.
- Fish should be opaque and flake easily with a fork when done.
- When cooking in a microwave oven, make sure that there are no cold spots in food where bacteria can survive.
- Leftovers should be heated to at least 165 °F.

To learn more about safe food handling, come to/call (*NAME AND LOCATION OF EVENT/ NAME AND TELEPHONE OF ORGANIZATION*) for (*ACTIVITIES AND/OR MATERIALS*).

Cook It SAFELY

Raw Food	Internal Temperature
Ground Products	
Hamburger	160°F
Beef, veal, lamb, pork	160°F
Beef, Veal, Lamb	
Roasts & Steaks	
<i>medium-rare</i>	145°F
<i>medium</i>	160°F
<i>well-done</i>	170°F
Pork	
Chops, roasts, ribs	
<i>medium</i>	160°F
<i>well-done</i>	170°F
Ham, fresh	160°F
Sausage, fresh	160°F
Poultry	
Duck	180°F
Turkey/Chicken (<i>unstuffed</i>)	180°F
Whole	180°F
Breast	170°F
Dark meat	180°F
Stuffing (<i>cooked separately</i>)	165°F
Eggs	
Fried, poached	<i>Yolk and white are firm</i>
Casseroles	160°F
Sauces, custards	160°F
Seafood	
Fin fish	
Shrimp, lobster and crabs	<i>Flesh opaque and flakes easily with fork</i>
Clams, oysters and mussels	<i>Shells red and flesh pearly and opaque</i> <i>Shells are open</i>