

Extension Notes

Keep It Clean to Keep Food Safe

We hear about food safety and the risk of foodborne illness all the time. But just what is it? The next time you experience symptoms like nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever, you may want to consider a foodborne illness as the culprit. While these relatively mild symptoms may seem like the 24 hour stomach flu, some foodborne illnesses can be very serious.

Everyone reacts differently, but the very young, the elderly, and some people with health issues suffer more severely. Recent evidence suggests that food-borne illness also can lead to long-term health problems like arthritis and kidney disease.

Foodborne illness is caused when food is contaminated with bacteria or viruses. While it is easy to blame food service establishments for foodborne illness, millions of people become ill each year as a result of handling food at home improperly.

Most foodborne illness is caused by time-temperature abuse, cross contamination, and poor personal hygiene. You can prevent illness at home by keeping hot foods hot - 140 degree or more, keeping cold foods cold - 40 degrees or below, reheating leftovers to 165 degrees, cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces, and washing your hands frequently.

In order to get a food-borne illness, microorganisms have to be present. That is not hard because they are everywhere, in the air, on counters, on us, and even on what looks like very safe food. So keeping everything clean is a very important rule.

Everyone in the kitchen is responsible for keeping food safe to eat. That includes keeping everything clean, refrigerating items immediately, and when in doubt, throwing it out. Hand washing removes micro-organisms that can be transferred from raw meat to foods that will not be cooked, like salad greens, by using dirty cutting boards or an unwashed knife.

Micro-organisms move around the kitchen on drops of raw meat juices, dirty towels and sponges, and utensils like knives and cutting boards. Keep kitchen towels and wash-cloths clean. Wipe up spills immediately.

Use plenty of hot soapy water to wash dishes and follow with a good rinse to keep utensils clean. Air drying dishes keeps micro organisms from being spread by damp and dirty towels. Cutting boards and other utensils may be sanitized in a chlorine solution. Soak them in a sanitizing solution for 1 to 2 minutes, remove, and let them air dry. The sanitizing solution recommended is 2 tablespoons of chlorine bleach to 1 gallon of warm water.

Hand washing is essential when working with food. You should wash your hands before and after handling meat products, when you change from one food preparation activity to another, after visiting the bathroom and any time your hands could have become contaminated.

In addition, many people have an assumption that you cannot put food in the refrigerator until it cools off, that it will harm the refrigerator and make the other foods in the refrigerator spoil. This thinking dates back to the days of the "ice box" cooler. Block ice was delivered to the home and used to cool the tightly closed ice box. If hot foods were put into this type of cooler, they would cause the ice to melt quicker and without ice to chill the food, the foods would spoil. That is not the case with modern refrigerators. Foods that are to be chilled should be refrigerated as soon as possible. Cover food or wrap tightly to keep out drips from other foods.

Finally, if in doubt, throw it out. The last rule is the bottom line to food safety. Contaminated food may not look bad, smell bad, or taste bad. If you think the food has been improperly handled while being prepared, cooked, or stored, do not eat it. And if it is not safe for you to eat, please do not give it to a pet.

By Janine B. Rywak, County Extension Director

Public Can Comment Online on NC Waterfowl Seasons

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission is inviting the public to provide input on regular waterfowl hunting seasons through an online comment system on its website, www.ncwildlife.org. Regular waterfowl seasons may begin in late September and include various seasons for ducks, Canada geese, snow geese, brant and tundra swans.

The public can comment on proposed dates for the seasons by visiting www.ncwildlife.org and clicking on the scrolling icon, "Regular Waterfowl Proposed Season Comments," located at the bottom of the home page. Comments on the proposed season dates will be accepted through Aug. 21.

Comments also can be mailed to: N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Proposed Regulations Comments, 1701 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1701.

Public input meetings were held across the state previously to receive comments on waterfowl seasons. However, attendance declined significantly from meetings in previous years and public input was minimal at most locations. As a cost-savings measure and to allow for an easy means for statewide input, the Wildlife Commission developed an online comment system, which has been in use for several years.

The online comments form also lists the federal frameworks from which seasons may be selected, a direct link to a map of North Carolina's Canada goose hunt zones, and a link to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

For more information on hunting seasons and safety, Hunting Heritage Apprentice Permits and the Hunter Education Program, go to www.ncwildlife.org/Hunting or call 919-707-0031.

Anson Teachers to Receive Assistance

The North Carolina Association for Biomedical Research (NCABR) is excited to announce a collaboration with the Biogen Idec Foundation that will send teachers from North Carolina's most economically distressed counties, including Anson, to this year's Bridging the Gap STEM education conference for free.

Through the Biogen Idec Foundation Scholars program, the Biogen Idec Foundation will cover registration fees and travel costs for 40 K-12 teachers who work in Tier 1 counties. Tier 1 counties have been deemed North Carolina's most economically distressed by the state Department of Commerce.

"Science is for everyone," said Machel Sanders, North Carolina trustee of the Biogen Idec Foundation. "The Biogen Idec Foundation wants to spark a passion for science and STEM fields among children across North Carolina. We know that investing in our teachers is one of the most important and effective ways to reach our future science leaders."

K-12 teachers and administrators who attend Bridging the Gap also will be eligible to apply for special funding for their schools to support STEM education programs and resources.

Bridging the Gap is an annual conference organized by NCABR. It brings together representatives from K-12 education, higher education, industry, state and local government, and other groups, such as museums and economic development nonprofits. Attendees share ideas and resources toward a common goal of strengthening science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, education throughout North Carolina at the K-12 and college levels.

The third annual edition of Bridging the Gap will be held Oct. 28-29, 2014, at the McKimmon Conference & Training Center, in Raleigh. Over the past two years, more than 650 educators, thought leaders, policymakers, industry representatives and others have attended. The Biogen Idec Foundation is the presenting sponsor of this year's conference.

NCABR is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1989 by the leaders in North Carolina's bioscience research community. NCABR's members and supporters include academia, industry, government, nonprofit research organizations and professional societies.

The Biogen Idec Foundation's mission is to improve the quality of peoples' lives and contribute to the vitality of the communities in which Biogen Idec operates. The Foundation focuses on STEM education and is committed to sparking a passion for science and discovery, supporting innovative STEM initiatives, and strengthening efforts to make science accessible to diverse populations.

More information about: Bridging the Gap conference - bridgingthegapnc.com; NCABR - ncabr.org; Biogen Idec Foundation - biogenidec.com; and 2014 North Carolina County Tier Designations - nccommerce.com.



ANSON COUNTY PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN

is currently seeking a full time position:

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Requirements for Program Coordinator:

- BA Degree in Early Childhood Education, Education, Business, Public Administration or related field required; Masters preferred.
- Experience in management and supervision
- Knowledge of early childhood issues
- Anson County residency preferred
- Experience in financial administration, data analysis, fundraising, grant writing, non-profit board preferred
- Excellent communication, writing and organizational skills
- Ability to work independently as well as with a team
- Ability to manage multiple projects and priorities
- Excellent skills in wide range of technology, including Microsoft Office (Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, etc.)
- Daily use of reliable car, valid driver's license and willingness to travel for meetings and trainings

Deadline for applications is Friday, September 5. No phone calls please.

ACPC application and job description are available at www.ansonchildren.org, or at 117 South Greene Street in Wadesboro.

Send resume, application and cover letter to:

Anson County Partnership for Children

Attention: Elaine B. Scarborough, Executive Director

117 South Greene Street

Wadesboro, NC 28170

elaine.scarborough@windstream.net

Anson County Partnership for Children is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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8-20x1pdc

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