Utah State University
DigitalCommons@USU

All Archived Publications | Archived USU Extension Publications

1-1-1993

# Frequently Asked Food Safety Questions

Charlotte P. Brennand
*Utah State University*

**Warning:** The information in this series may be obsolete. It is presented here for historical purposes only. For the most up to date information please visit The Utah State University Cooperative Extension Office

Recommended Citation
Brennand, Charlotte P., "Frequently Asked Food Safety Questions" (1993). *All Archived Publications.* Paper 696.
http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_histall/696

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Archived USU Extension Publications at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Archived Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact becky.thoms@usu.edu.

Utah State University Extension
electronic publishing

*Food Safety*

*Fact Sheet*

# Frequently Asked Food Safety Questions

***Charlotte P. Brennand***, Ph.D., Food Science Extension Specialist

1993 FN-250

**Q. Are my canned goods that froze in the garage still safe?**

**A.** Freezing does not directly affect the safety of the canned goods; however, the expansion of water during freezing can damage the can. Any pinholes in the can seam or seal renders the good unsafe and these small holes can be very difficult to see. If the can still has a good vacuum, it is safe. Otherwise, it should be discarded. Cans with a good vacuum will have concave lids and air will rush in when the lid is pierced. If whether or not the can still has a good vacuum is questionable, don't eat it.

**Q. I accidently left the stew on the counter overnight. Can I reheat it and still safely eat the stew?**

**A.** **NO.** Although reheating foods is helpful in decreasing certain types of food poisoning cases, some types of microorganisms will survive the reheating and there are also organisms that produce a toxin which is not affected by reheating. Eating food left out overnight is a real gamble. The general rule is do not hold food at room temperatures between 40° F to 140° F for more than 2 hours.

**Q. I have cans of dehydrated foods that are bulging. Are they safe to use?**

**A.** If the food is quite dry, it is still safe to eat. Cans of dry products processed at sea level may swell some at high altitudes. Also, storing dry products for very long periods of time may result in package swelling and a lower quality product.

**Q. My freezer accidently came unplugged. What can I safely refreeze or use?**

**A**. Fruit products, breads and other baked products may be used or refrozen. If they still contain ice crystals, meat and poultry may safely be refrozen. Fish and frozen vegetables which are still at 40° F or less may be used, but not refrozen.

**Q. If I want to store emergency-use water, how much chlorine bleach should I put in it?**

**A.** Water from a city supply which has already been chlorinated should not need further treatment. If treatment is needed, use ¼ teaspoon liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water.

**Q. I have cans of food that are 10 years old. Is it safe to use them?**

**A.** Yes. The quality and nutritive value will have decreased, but they will not hurt you as long as they are not bulging and no spurting occurs when they are opened.

**Q. Should I be worrying about pesticides on fruits and vegetables?**

**A.** A very small percent of our fresh produce has measurable pesticide residues. Washing fruit and vegetables is recommended as a safety precaution since this will remove most of any pesticide residue, dirt and environmental pollutants.

**Q. Do I need to use soap and water to clean my fruits and vegetables?**

**A.** Rinse your fruits and vegetables in clean running water. Soap is neither necessary nor desirable. It is not an approved food additive.

**Q. My can of honey is bulging. Is it safe to use?**

**A.** Honey can react with the can lining to release a gas, especially when stored over long periods of time. Honey's high sugar content prevents bacteria growth. If there is no sign of mold growth, it is safe to eat.

**Q. Are stored grains, e.g. wheat and rice, safe to use if they are infested with weevils?**

**A.** Weevils are unappetizing, but safe to consume.

**Q. Can I partially cook my turkey one day then refrigerate it and finish cooking it another time?**

**A.** This is not a good idea for two reasons. First, you risk food poisoning and second, the saving in time will be insignificant since the turkey will still need to be heated to the same final temperature.

**Q. Is it safe to thaw meat and poultry on the counter?**

**A.** No. Because some part of the meat may reach unsafe storage temperatures before other parts are thawed. Thawing in the refrigerator or in a microwave oven are always safe methods. Water-tight packages can be thawed in a pan of cool water.

**Q. Is it safe to store food in their cans in the refrigerator?**

**A.** Yes. There is no food safety problem, however, some products like tomato juice may develop a metallic flavor.

**Q. Are wooden cutting boards safe to use?**

**A.** The problem with wooden cutting boards is that they are hard to clean and can contaminate food with bacteria. Plastic cutting boards are a better choice from a food microbial standpoint. Regardless of types of board, it should be vigorously scrubbed with hot soapy water or washed in a dishwasher when used for raw meat, fish or poultry.

**Q. I've heard that it isn't safe to give babies honey. Is this true?**

**A**. Yes. Babies under one year of age should not eat honey. It can cause infant botulism which can be deadly.

## WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!!

**Utah State University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.**
Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Robert L. Gilliland, Vice President and Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Utah State University, Logan, Utah. (EP/3-95/DF)