



# Food Safety Monthly Update

*Information from the desk of State Extension Consumer Food Safety Specialist*

October 1, 2013

*Welcome to the second edition of the Kansas State University/University of Missouri Extension Food Safety update. This update is intended to provide timely, credible food safety information to county/district FCS agents, regional Food and Nutrition Specialists, as well as anyone else interested in such information. I hope this is helpful to you- please let me know any comments or questions you may have on this newsletter or any other food safety matters.*

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### Food Safety in Pregnancy

As many of you know, this topic is of personal importance to me currently! Therefore, I developed a fact sheet to provide information on this important topic. It is available from the upper right hand corner of: [www.ksre.ksu.edu/foodsafety/](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/foodsafety/). More information on food safety for pregnant women and other higher risk populations is also [available from Kansas State](#).

### Press release on tailgating safety

It's that time of year again: tailgating season! I recently put out a press release with some food safety tips for tailgating, available from:

[www.ksre.ksu.edu/news/story/tail\\_gating091813.aspx](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/news/story/tail_gating091813.aspx)

More information on tailgating food safety is available from the [Missouri](#) and [Kansas](#) Extension websites.

### “Choice Salsa” recipe now available

Many people love to get creative when making salsa. The National Center for Home Food Preservation has just published a recipe for “Choice Salsa” that will allow people to be a little more creative when canning salsa, but also to do so safely. The recipe is available from: [http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_salsa/choice\\_salsa.html](http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_salsa/choice_salsa.html)

### Product dating: Food waste vs. food safety

You may have seen media coverage of a recent report on food waste that is caused by confusion over the dates found on the product. I wrote a post for the Mizzou Nutrition Mythbusters blog on product dating, food waste, and food safety, which is available from <http://nutritionmythbusters.blogspot.com/>

### Webinar Follow-up information

1) In case you missed the Kids' Home Food Safety Mythbusters: A Fight BAC! Webinar, the information from that webinar is available from:

[www.fightbac.org/campaigns/mythbusters](http://www.fightbac.org/campaigns/mythbusters)

2) The International Food Information Council presented the 2013 Food & Health Survey, as well as other food safety information in a webinar on Sept 19. The slides of that presentation are at: [www.foodinsight.org/Resources/Detail.aspx?topic=Food\\_Safety\\_Matters\\_Food\\_Safety\\_Education\\_Month](http://www.foodinsight.org/Resources/Detail.aspx?topic=Food_Safety_Matters_Food_Safety_Education_Month) More information and details of the survey which includes consumer perceptions and food handling practices regarding food safety are also [available](#).

### Food Safety Q&A

The following questions are some of the food safety questions I have fielded recently, so I thought I would share the responses more widely in case others are also interested.

#### Q: Why do you need to remove vacuum-packaged frozen fish from its package before thawing?

A: When the fish is frozen, *Clostridium botulinum* (*C. bot*) canNOT grow (even under vacuum). However, *C. bot* can potentially grow in products under vacuum (no oxygen) at refrigerated temperatures, and even more readily as the temperatures creep above 40F. However, if the product is removed from the vacuum seal to thaw, the oxygen now present will prevent the growth of *C. bot*, even if the temp is above freezing.

#### Q: Should consumers use soap or produce washes when washing their fresh fruit and vegetables?

Many companies are trying to sell chemical produce washes, which may be advertised as helping to keep fresh fruits and vegetables safe. There are many

reasons why washing with such chemicals or even soap is not necessary:

- 1) Porous produce could absorb the chemicals or soap, affecting their safety and taste.
- 2) The safety of produce washes' residues have not been well evaluated.
- 3) Soap is not designed for washing produce.
- 4) Little testing has been done to evaluate their effectiveness. However, one [university study](#) showed that using clean water removed the same or even more microorganisms and pesticide residues than various produce washes.

Therefore, you are safer and can save money by only using clean water to wash produce.

Sources:

- [Guide to Washing Fresh Produce. Colorado State University. 2013](#)

- [Raw Produce: Selecting and Serving it Safely. FDA 2013](#)

#### Q. How can consumers get information about food recalls?

In addition to information in the media, consumers can get food recalls and alerts from FDA and USDA by email, via mobile phone app, through an RSS feed, or by checking the [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov) website:

[www.foodsafety.gov/recalls/recent/index.html](http://www.foodsafety.gov/recalls/recent/index.html)

If consumers have purchased a food product that has been recalled and used a grocery store loyalty card when buying it, or bought it from a company such as Schawns™, the retailer will likely contact them as they have the consumers' buying information.

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