Welcome . . .

to the USDA Food Safety Planner for 2005!

Throughout this planner, you'll find food safety information, ideas, and topics you can use to help you get the word out.

Look for:

- Online resources
- Cooking guidelines from USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service
- Camera-ready charts
- Editorial calendar
- And more!

Meet Karen . . .

She's a "Virtual" Abundance of Food Safety Information!

It's 3:00 a.m. Do you know where your leftovers are?

Yikes! You fell asleep and forgot to put your leftovers in the refrigerator – and *now* you're ready for a pre-dawn snack. But are these morsels still safe to eat? And what's more – is there anybody awake you can even *ask*?

Enter **Karen** – USDA's new "virtual representative." She's available **24 hours a day, 7 days a week** to answer your food safety questions!

Karen represents the latest in technology and offers food safety advice around the clock. She has a wealth of information at her fingertips. In fact, her extensive database includes answers to more than 4,000 questions!

She can provide detailed information on . . .

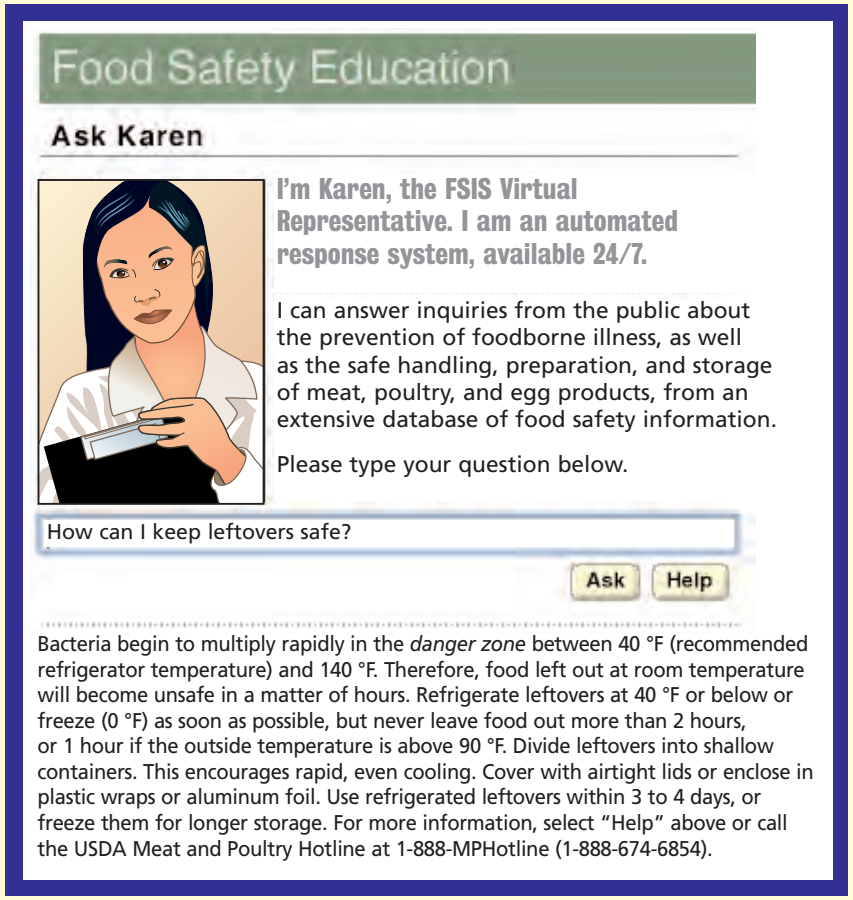
- Safe storage, preparation, and handling of meat, poultry, and egg products.
- Prevention of foodborne illness and disease.

More than just a technological marvel, Karen embodies yet another way USDA reaches out to consumers in support of its public health mission to assure the safety and security of America's food supply.

So jump on the virtual bandwagon – and "Ask Karen"! Go to:
www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/ask_karen/

Working with Karen

- **Type your question** – or just the subject area and/or keywords — in the text box and select "Ask." The answer to your question will appear below the dotted line.
- If Karen is unable to answer your exact question, she will suggest a **list of related questions**. For information, select the "Help" button.
- Karen also provides **links to other Web pages** with additional information.



Food Safety Education

Ask Karen

I'm Karen, the FSIS Virtual Representative. I am an automated response system, available 24/7.

I can answer inquiries from the public about the prevention of foodborne illness, as well as the safe handling, preparation, and storage of meat, poultry, and egg products, from an extensive database of food safety information.

Please type your question below.

How can I keep leftovers safe?

Ask Help

Bacteria begin to multiply rapidly in the *danger zone* between 40 °F (recommended refrigerator temperature) and 140 °F. Therefore, food left out at room temperature will become unsafe in a matter of hours. Refrigerate leftovers at 40 °F or below or freeze (0 °F) as soon as possible, but never leave food out more than 2 hours, or 1 hour if the outside temperature is above 90 °F. Divide leftovers into shallow containers. This encourages rapid, even cooling. Cover with airtight lids or enclose in plastic wraps or aluminum foil. Use refrigerated leftovers within 3 to 4 days, or freeze them for longer storage. For more information, select "Help" above or call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854).

Got a food safety question? Just go to
www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/ask_karen/

Publications, E-mail Updates, and More!

"Ask Karen" is one of the newest educational offerings from the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). But there are many *other* nifty resources available to you, too. In addition to the knowledge offered by the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline staff, the FSIS Web site offers a wealth of **consumer publications** for use in your media and outreach efforts – including PDFs of many publications. So click on over to see the whole assortment!

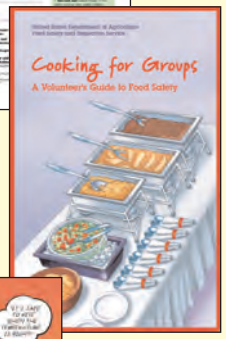
What's Available Online?

Here is just a sampling of the hundreds of brochures, fact sheets, and press releases you can find online at **www.fsis.usda.gov**!

Protect Your Baby and Yourself from Listeria

An informative flyer specifically targeted to this at-risk population.

www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/foodborne_illness_&_disease_fact_sheets/



Cooking for Groups

A handy guide for those organizing potlucks, charity events, and even family reunions.

www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/safe_food_handling_fact_sheets/

Thermy™: Use a Food Thermometer

A must-have brochure that includes a safe cooking temperature chart.

www.fsis.usda.gov/education/thermy_for_educators/

Let's Talk Turkey

This handy brochure should be on everyone's shopping list!

www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/safe_food_handling_fact_sheets/

Be The First To Know!

The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service has another great feature – and it's *ideal* for those who are busy meeting press deadlines and organizing community outreach events.

Our new E-mail subscription service notifies you whenever items you subscribe to are updated. Now you can more easily manage the abundance of online information – **because it comes to *you* when something is new!**

Look for this icon to sign up at **www.fsis.usda.gov**

Facing a press deadline? Don't miss the camera-ready artwork on the inside back cover!

January

Hotline Hot Topics

Kick off your event with an assortment of trophy-worthy foods . . . but while the players reach the end zone, remember to avoid the **"Danger Zone"** — the bacteria-friendly temperatures between 40 and 140 °F.

You and your guests will stay food-safe with this game plan for tackling "BAC" at your buffet:

- Hot foods should be kept hot at 140 °F or above. Keep food hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays.
- Cold foods should be kept cold, at 40 °F or below. Place containers of cold food on ice to keep the food safe.
- Check temperatures with a food thermometer.
- Keep buffet portions small and replenish often with fresh platters.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Food Safety Education on Wheels The USDA Food Safety Mobile was launched in 2003 and has been traveling coast to coast educating consumers about food safety ever since! It offers a fabulous partnership opportunity for educators, USDA representatives, and media. It arrives stocked with education materials, cooking demo equipment, and even the Thermy™ and Fight BAC!® costumes!						1 New Year's Day
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday (Observed)	18	19	20 Inauguration Day	21	22
23 / 30	24 / 31	25	26	27	28	29

"Hello . . . Meat and Poultry Hotline."

Q: *"How long can I keep turkey – or any meat or poultry product – in the freezer?"*

A: "For optimal quality, you can keep a turkey in the freezer for a year. However, as with any meat and poultry product, the quality may be reduced with long-term storage. From a *safety* standpoint, you can keep meat or poultry in the freezer indefinitely." *(See the Cold Storage Chart in the back.)*

Contact Info

Meat and Poultry Hotline:
1-888-MPHotline

TTY:
1-800-256-7072

E-mail:
mphotline.fsis@usda.gov

Web site:
www.fsis.usda.gov

February

Hotline Hot Topics

Follow these tips for staying safe whether eating out or staying in.

- Choose menu items that are **thoroughly cooked**. If it appears that any food, such as beef, pork, chicken, eggs, or fish is undercooked, send it back for additional cooking.
- If you take home a **"doggie bag"** – refrigerate it within 2 hours of serving. Reheat leftovers to 165 °F.
- Getting **take-out** to take home to your sweetie? Eat it within 2 hours – and don't let the food sit out at room temperature while you're leisurely sharing news of your day!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 President's Day	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

Food Safety Education on Wheels

The Food Safety Mobile appears at State and county fairs, schools, libraries, grocery stores, community events, parades, festivals, health and safety expos, and conventions.

"Buenos días. ¿En qué puedo servirle?"

Q: *"Should I use a wooden cutting board or a plastic one?"*

A: "Either is fine – as long as you make sure they are properly cleaned. Wash cutting boards thoroughly after every use with hot, soapy water. The hotter the better. Once cutting boards become excessively worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves, discard them."

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March

Hotline Hot Topics

Follow these thawing guidelines to keep food safe:

- Defrost food **in the refrigerator**. This is the safest method for thawing perishable food.
- Short on time? Thaw meat and poultry in airtight packaging **in cold water**. Be sure to change the water every 30 minutes, so the food continues to thaw – but *never* defrost in hot water.
- Defrost food **in the microwave** *only* if it will be cooked immediately.
- Avoid defrosting in the "**Danger Zone**" – the unsafe temperatures between 40 and 140 °F within which bacteria can thrive. That means giving the cold shoulder to thawing food on the counter!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19
20 First Day of Spring	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 Easter	28	29	30	31		

"Hello…Meat and Poultry Hotline."

Q: *"Is it safe to refreeze food that has thawed completely?"*

A: "It is safe to refreeze *only* if it has been thawed in the refrigerator at 40 °F or below, where bacteria haven't had a chance to multiply.

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April

Hotline Hot Topics

The "Big Three" Cleaning Commandments:

1. Wash hands with warm, soapy water before and after food preparation and especially after preparing meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood.
2. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next food. A mixture of 1 teaspoon liquid chlorine bleach to 1 quart of water can provide added protection.
3. Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If you use cloth towels, launder them often in hot, soapy water.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Food Safety Education on Wheels The USDA Food Safety Mobile is 36 feet long, 8.5 feet wide, 12 feet tall, and weighs about 23,000 pounds when loaded. It's emblazoned with bold, eye-catching graphics and prominent food safety messages.					1	2
3 Daylight Savings Time begins	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Tax Day	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 Passover
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

"Hello…Meat and Poultry Hotline."

Q: *"How can I tell if my hamburger is done?"*

A: "The only way to tell if a hamburger (or any meat and poultry product) is done is by using a food thermometer. Cook hamburgers to 160 °F." *(For other recommended temperatures, see the cooking temperature chart in the back.)*

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May

Hotline Hot Topics

Here are the Hotline's recommendations for safe grilling:

- Make a food thermometer your "must have" tool.
- Keep meat and poultry in the refrigerator or in an insulated cooler with a cold source until ready to grill.
- Always marinate foods in the refrigerator. Sauce that was used to marinate raw meat or poultry should not be reused on cooked foods, unless it is boiled first.
- Cook ground beef to 160 °F. Roasts and steaks may be cooked to 145 °F for medium rare or to 160 °F for medium. Cook chicken breasts to 170 °F. (For other foods, see the cooking temperature chart in the back.)
- Don't cross-contaminate! Never place cooked food back on the same plate or cutting board that previously held raw food without washing it first.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Mother's Day	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 Memorial Day, Observed	31				

Food Safety Education on Wheels

The USDA Food Safety Mobile has been in high demand since its launch. By the end of 2004, it had been to approximately 200 events and was visited by 600,000 people!

"Hello…Meat and Poultry Hotline."

Q: *"How long can canned goods be stored?"*

A: "Foods that are high in acid (like tomatoes, juices, and canned fruits) can be stored for 1 year to 18 months. Other canned goods (like beans, soups, or gravies) are best if used within 2 to 5 years. All canned goods should be stored in a cool, dry place – and if you see any bulging or seepage in seams, discard the can."

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June

Hotline Hot Topics

Keep it cold and clean and your picnic will be postcard-worthy.

- Start out safely by thoroughly washing hands before preparing, cooking, and serving foods. If soap and water are not available at the picnic site, bring disposable towelettes or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean hands.
- Always use ice or cold packs to pack your cooler once you fill it with food. A full cooler will maintain its cold temperature longer than one that is partially filled.
- Don't eat perishable foods that have been left out of the cooler for more than 1 hour on a hot day (90 °F or higher).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Food Safety Education on Wheels The Mobile's home base is in Beltsville, MD, just outside of FSIS headquarters in Washington, DC. But it is on the road across the U.S.A. for 10 to 11 months a year!			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 Father's Day	20	21 First Day of Summer	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

"Hello…Meat and Poultry Hotline."

Q: *"Is it safe to leave perishable food out of the refrigerator overnight?"*

A: "No. Food that has been left out of the refrigerator too long may be dangerous to eat. If food has been left in the "Danger Zone" – between 40 and 140 °F – for more than 2 hours (1 hour in temperatures above 90 °F), discard it."

Contact Info

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Web site:
www.fsis.usda.gov

July

Hotline Hot Topics

The USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline is your source for food safety information – so keep their contact information close at hand. And don't forget to wish them a happy anniversary!

Toll-free Number:
1-888-MPHotline
(1-888-674-6854)

TTY:
1-800-256-7072

Via E-mail:
mphotline.fsis@usda.gov

Visit online:
www.fsis.usda.gov

Virtual Q&A:
www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/ask_ karen/

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Food Safety Education on Wheels By the end of last year, the Food Safety Mobile had been reported on in approximately 250 articles including newspapers, television and radio stations, and Web sites.					1 Meat & Poultry Hotline 20th Anniversary	2
3	4 Independence Day	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 / 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

"Buenas tardes. ¿En qué puedo servirle?"

Q: *"What are 'use by' and 'sell by' dates? Is it a law for foods to have them?"*

A: "Some States have 'date' laws, but there are no Federal regulations for them (except for baby formula). 'Use by' dates are usually generated at the processing plant and 'sell by' dates are added by the merchant. In any case, both are intended to ensure quality, not safety." *(See Cold Storage Chart in the back.)*

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August

Hotline Hot Topics

Keep lunch boxes food-safe with these guidelines:

- Always wash your hands with warm, soapy water and kitchen surfaces and utensils with hot, soapy water before and after preparing food.
- Take cold foods from the refrigerator and pack them in an insulated lunch box just before leaving. Include a cold pack.
- Hot foods, such as soup and chili, belong in an insulated container – but first fill the container with boiling water and let it stand for a few minutes to warm it up. Then, empty the container and fill it with piping hot food.
  Note: A parent or other adult should do this for children.
- Don't let food sit at room temperature. Eat it right away or put it back in your lunch box with a frozen gel-pack.
- Be sure to wash out lunch boxes or totes every night!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Food Safety Education on Wheels

By the end of 2004, the USDA Food Safety Mobile had visited all 48 States in the Continental U.S. and the District of Columbia.

"Hello…Meat and Poultry Hotline."

Q: *"What type of food thermometer should I use when cooking a hamburger?"*

A: "The best type of food thermometer to use with thin foods, like hamburgers, is a digital thermometer. The sensor is in the tip, and it gives a fast reading."

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September

Hotline Hot Topics

The Four Steps to Food Safety

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Food Safety Education on Wheels Is the USDA Food Safety Mobile coming your way? Check the upcoming schedule at www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/food_safety_mobile/index.asp				1	2	3
4	5 Labor Day	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 First day of Autumn	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

"Hello…Meat and Poultry Hotline."

Q: *"Do you have any microwave safety tips?"*

A: "When cooking in a microwave oven, cover, stir, and turn food for even cooking. Observe standing time. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the food."

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October

Hotline Hot Topics

Warm up to these food safety tips for keeping hot food hot and cold food cold at your tailgate party.

- Grill hot dogs until hot and steamy and hamburgers until they reach 160 °F on a food thermometer.
- Foods like cold fried chicken should go directly from the refrigerator into the cooler. Include a cold pack.
- Use insulated containers for hot items like stews and chili. Pack them right before you leave and don't open them until serving time.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Food Safety Education on Wheels Request a visit from the Food Safety Mobile! Here are three ways to do so: • Go to **www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/food_safety_mobile/index.asp** • Send an E-mail to **foodsafetymobile@fsis.usda.gov** • Call **(301) 504-9605**						1
2	3	4 Rosh Hashanah First Day of Ramadan	5	6	7	8
9	10 Columbus Day, Observed	11	12	13 Yom Kippur	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 / 30 Daylight Savings Time ends	24 / 31 Halloween	25	26	27	28	29

"Hello…Meat and Poultry Hotline."

Q: *"How can I keep frozen foods safe during a power failure?"*

A: "A full freezer will keep foods safe for 48 hours. A partially filled one lasts for 24 hours. The key is to make sure products are 'fridge cold' (40 °F). If more time has elapsed, check each product with a food thermometer. If it still has ice crystals, it's okay."

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November

Hotline Hot Topics

Basic Turkey HOW-TOs:

1. Remove the neck and giblets.
2. Combine stuffing ingredients just before cooking. For optimal safety, cook stuffing outside the bird in a casserole. If you plan to cook the stuffing in the turkey, fill it loosely just before cooking.
3. Place turkey in an oven set to no lower than 325 °F. If desired, a "tent" of foil may be placed over the turkey for the first 1 to 1 $^1/_2$ hours.
4. To check if the turkey has reached a safe internal temperature, insert a food thermometer into the thickest part of the turkey's inner thigh without touching the bone.
   - The turkey is done when the food thermometer reads 180 °F.
   - The stuffing should reach 165 °F.
5. Let turkey "rest" at room temperature for 20 minutes – then remove stuffing and start carving.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 Veterans' Day	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 Hotline hours: 8 am – 2 pm ET Thanksgiving	25	26
27	28	29	30			

"Hello…Meat and Poultry Hotline!"

Q: *"What is the safest way to thaw a frozen turkey?"*

A: "The safest way is to defrost it in the refrigerator. Allow 24 hours for every 5 pounds of turkey. If you are running short on time, you can thaw it in airtight packaging in cold water (change the water every 30 minutes so the turkey continues to thaw) or in the microwave (cook immediately)."

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December

Hotline Hot Topics

Celebrate by following these guidelines when preparing, serving, or bringing food this season.

- Going to a party? **Transport hot foods and dips** in insulated containers and carry the serving bowls separately.
- **Reheat make-ahead meals** to 165 °F before serving. Foods such as quiches or soufflés should be refrigerated if you aren't serving them immediately.
- Foods containing unpasteurized or uncooked eggs may cause foodborne illness. If an item like Caesar salad or eggnog **contains uncooked eggs**, consider ordering something else.
- **Keep holiday cream pies and cakes** with whipped-cream and cream-cheese frostings refrigerated. Avoid licking the spoon when mixing cookie dough or cake batters that contain uncooked eggs.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Food Safety Education on Wheels The USDA Food Safety Mobile has appeared at such events as the Kentucky Derby, Cheyenne Frontier Days, and dozens of local, State, and national events. Check out news releases and video at www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/mobile_news_video_photo_&_images/index.asp				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 First Day of Winter	22	23	24
25 Christmas	26 Hanukkah Kwanzaa begins	27	28	29	30	31

"Hello…Meat and Poultry Hotline."

Q: *"My power went out, and some of the food in my freezer was partially thawed. Is it safe?"*

A: "Yes, as long as the food still contains ice crystals or the freezer has not risen above 40 °F."

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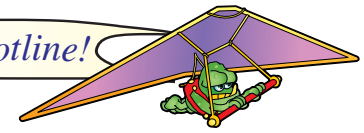
1-888-MPHotline

Two Decades of Food Safety Education . . . and Counting!

When the **USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline** plugged in its first phone line on July 1, 1985, an incredible interactive program of helping consumers with food safety questions was born. The first caller to the Hotline was advised NOT to mail a favorite sausage to her son, who was stationed halfway around the world in the Indian Ocean. From a staff of 3 to its current 12, food safety specialists – each with at least 1 or 2 college degrees – continue to augment their knowledge of food safety issues to answer callers' increasingly complex inquiries.

Since that day, the Hotline staff has served almost **2 million callers**. From coast to coast and all year 'round, the calls come in and consumers get answers. And as the 20th Anniversary comes and goes . . . the Hotline looks forward to serving new callers every day.

Celebrating 20 Years of the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline!



Consumers Ask . . . and USDA Listens

As consumers have become more knowledgeable about food safety and the risk of foodborne illness, the questions have become more technical. These changing interests and growing sophistication are reflected in the calls to the Hotline and in the available resources, too.

- The Hotline handles such emergency situations as foodborne illness outbreaks, power outages, natural disasters, and food product recalls. In these instances, callers get detailed information and next steps.
- Fact sheets and brochures like *Keeping Food Safe During an Emergency* are always available at **www.fsis.usda.gov**.

¡Hablamos español!

Food safety information is available in Spanish – both electronically and on the phone. The Hotline has bilingual food safety specialists on staff . . . and information is readily available online for viewing and downloading.

Para español:
Llame al teléfono:
1-888-MPHOTLINE (1-888-674-6854)
o
Visite la página electrónica:
www.fsis.usda.gov/en_espanol/index.asp

"Who's Calling?" Hotline Facts 'n Figures

- Most calls: **California**
- Fewest calls: **Wyoming**
- States "calling in" on a daily basis: **30**
- Average number of calls received each month: **8,000**
- Busiest Month: **November**
- Average number of calls during the holiday season: a whopping **27,000**!
- Growth in Hotline phone staff since 1985: **400%** (from 3 to 12 staffers)

Hotline hours

- Monday – Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, year round
- Thanksgiving Day: 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET
- Recorded food safety messages available 24 hours a day
- Online 24/7: www.fsis.usda.gov

Resources for Media and Education Outreach

Visit our Web site: www.fsis.usda.gov

It gives you access to dozens of downloadable fact sheets and publications for use in your media and outreach efforts. The site also contains hundreds of food safety publications for consumers. Many of these evolved from questions received by the Hotline!

Online Topics Include:

- Cooking for Groups
- Safe Food Handling
- Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products Preparation
- Seasonal Food Safety
- Food Labeling
- Appliances and Thermometers
- Foodborne Illness & Disease
- Emergency Preparedness
- Food Safety and Inspection Service Programs and Workforce
- Production and Inspection

While you're online — be sure to "**Ask Karen**" and sign up for E-mail alerts!

Stranger Than Fiction . . .

The Hotline staff knows a lot – and chances are, they've heard it all, too! Here are some calls that have gone well beyond the typical question about safe cooking temperatures:

Balcony Tug-of-War . . .

A man called to say he had left his leftover turkey on the balcony to keep it cold. Later he noticed a raccoon gnawing on the leftover bird. He ended up getting into a tug-of-war with the raccoon, and won! Then he called the Hotline to ask, "Is the turkey still safe to eat?"

Fiberglass Thanksgiving?

A woman didn't have enough room in her refrigerator to thaw her turkey, so she put it in the attic to thaw because it was cool up there. Unbeknownst to her, the family cat got into the attic and starting batting the turkey around. When the woman returned for the turkey, it was covered with scratch marks and insulation. She too called to ask,"Can we still eat the turkey?"

Beef Taken to the Cleaners!

A woman called saying she had cooked a roast. She didn't have any more oven cooking bags at home and ended up using one of those thin, plastic dry cleaner bags instead. Of course, the heat completely melted the plastic all over the outside of the roast. "Will it be safe to eat if I scrape the melted plastic off the outside of the roast?" she asked.

In case you're wondering – the answer was a resounding "no" in all three instances!

Behind the Scenes: Decades of Experience and Education Expertise

Susan Conley and Barbara O'Brien boast a combined 37 years with USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. Together they share a vision for making food safety a household priority across the U.S.A.

Susan Conley
Director
Food Safety Education Staff

Barbara M. O'Brien, R.D.
Deputy Director
Food Safety Education Staff

USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline alumni (Marianne, Diane, Gertie, Robyn, and Linda) gather to celebrate this landmark occasion in USDA consumer education history! All still work at FSIS in other educational capacities.

Media Contact

Have a question about food safety issues? For further information, contact the Hotline staff:

Call:
1-888-MPHotline
(1-888-674-6854)
or
E-mail:
mphotline.fsis@usda.gov

They'd be delighted to provide additional information for your upcoming article!

Camera-Ready Charts

Internal Cooking Temperatures

FOOD	°F
Ground Meat & Meat Mixtures	
Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	160
Turkey, Chicken	165
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb	
Medium Rare	145
Medium	160
Well Done	170
Poultry	
Chicken & Turkey, whole	180
Poultry breasts, roast	170
Poultry thighs, wings	180
Duck & Goose	180
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165
Fresh Pork	
Medium	160
Well Done	170
Ham	
Fresh (raw)	160
Pre-cooked (to reheat)	140
Eggs & Egg Dishes	
Eggs	Cook until yolk & white are firm
Egg dishes	160
Leftovers & Casseroles	165

Cold Storage Chart

Since product dates aren't a guide for safe use of a product, consult this chart and follow these guidelines. These short, but safe, time limits will help keep refrigerated food (40 °F) from spoiling or becoming dangerous.

- Purchase the product before "sell-by" or expiration dates.
- Follow handling recommendations on product.
- Keep meat and poultry in its package until just before using.
- If freezing meat and poultry in its original package longer than 2 months, overwrap these packages with airtight heavy-duty foil, plastic wrap, or freezer paper, or place the package inside a plastic bag.

Because freezing (0 °F) keeps food safe indefinitely, recommended storage times are for quality only.

Product	Refrigerator (40 °F)	Freezer (0 °F)
Eggs		
Fresh, in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Don't freeze
Raw yolks, whites	2 to 4 days	1 year
Hard cooked	1 week	Doesn't freeze well
Liquid pasteurized eggs, egg substitutes		
opened	3 days	Doesn't freeze well
unopened	10 days	1 year
Mayonnaise		
Commercial		
Refrigerate after opening	2 months	Don't freeze
Frozen Dinners & Entrees		
Keep frozen until ready to heat	—	3 to 4 months
Deli & Vacuum-Packed Products		
Store-prepared (or homemade) egg, chicken, ham, tuna, macaroni salads	3 to 5 days	Doesn't freeze well
Hot Dogs & Luncheon Meats		
Hot dogs		
opened package	1 week	1 to 2 months
unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Luncheon meats		
opened package	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Bacon & Sausage		
Bacon	7 days	1 month
Sausage, raw, from chicken, turkey, pork, beef	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
Smoked breakfast links, patties	7 days	1 to 2 months
Hard sausage – pepperoni	2 to 3 weeks	1 to 2 months
Summer sausage, labeled "Keep Refrigerated"		
opened	3 weeks	1 to 2 months
unopened	3 months	1 to 2 months
Ham, Corned Beef		
Corned beef, in pouch with pickling juices	5 to 7 days	Drained, 1 month
Ham, canned, labeled "Keep Refrigerated,"		
opened	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
unopened	6 to 9 months	Don't freeze
Ham, fully cooked, vacuumed sealed at plant, undated, unopened	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Ham, Corned Beef (Cont.)		
Ham, fully cooked, vacuumed sealed at plant, dated, unopened	"use by" date on package	1 to 2 months
Ham, fully cooked, whole	7 days	1 to 2 months
Ham, fully cooked, half	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Ham, fully cooked, slices	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months
Hamburger, Ground, & Stew Meat		
Hamburger & stew meat	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Ground turkey, veal, pork, lamb & mixtures of them	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb & Pork		
Steaks	3 to 5 days	6 to 12 months
Chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months
Roasts	3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months
Variety meats (tongue, kidneys, liver, heart, chitterlings)	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Pre-stuffed, uncooked, pork chops, lamb chops, or chicken breasts stuffed with dressing	1 day	Doesn't freeze well
Soups & Stews		
Vegetable or meat added	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Meat Leftovers		
Cooked meat & meat casseroles	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Gravy & meat broth	1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months
Fresh Poultry		
Chicken or turkey, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
Chicken or turkey, pieces	1 to 2 days	9 months
Giblets	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Cooked Poultry		
Fried chicken	3 to 4 days	4 months
Cooked poultry casseroles	3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months
Pieces, plain	3 to 4 days	4 months
Pieces, covered with broth, gravy	1 to 2 days	6 months
Chicken nuggets, patties	1 to 2 days	1 to 3 months
Pizza	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months
Stuffing, cooked	3 to 4 days	1 month

Tablas listas para imprimir

Temperaturas Internas de Cocción

Producto	°F
Carne molida y mezclas	
Res, ternera, cordero, cerdo	160
Pavo, pollo	165
Carne fresca de res, ternera, cordero	
Medio crudo	145
Punto medio	160
Bien cocido	170
Aves	
Pollo, pavo—entero	180
Pollo, pavo—carne oscura	180
Aves—pechuga	170
Pato y ganso	180
Relleno (cocido solo o en el ave)	165
Carne fresca de cerdo	
Punto medio	160
Bien cocido	170
Jamón	
Fresco (crudo)	160
Precocinado (para recalentar)	140
Huevos y platos a base de huevos	
Huevos	Cueza hasta que las yemas y claras estén firmes
Guisos de huevos	160
Sobras	165

Tabla de almacenamiento en frío

Dado que las fechas de los productos no constituyen una guía para el uso seguro de dichos productos, consulte esta tabla y siga los siguientes consejos. Estos límites de tiempo breves pero seguros ayudarán a mantener los alimentos refrigerados a 40 °F, para que no se echen a perder ni sean peligrosos.

- Compre el producto antes de la fecha "vender antes del" o la fecha de vencimiento.
- Siga las recomendaciones de manipulación incluidas en el producto.
- Mantenga la carne de res y ave en el envase hasta el momento de usarla.
- Si congela la carne de res y ave en el envase original durante más de 2 meses, cúbralos con un papel de aluminio hermético resistente, envoltura plástica o papel para congelador, o bien coloque el envase dentro de una bolsa de plástico.

Dado que congelar alimentos a una temperatura de 0 °F los mantiene inocuos por tiempo indefinido, los siguientes tiempos de almacenamiento recomendados se proporcionan sólo por motivos de calidad.

Producto	Refrigerador (40 °F)	Congelador (0 °F)
Huevos		
Frescos, en el cascarón	3 a 5 semanas	No congelar
Yemas y claras crudas	2 a 4 días	1 año
Huevos duros	1 semana	No se congelan bien
Huevos líquidos pasteurizados, sustitutos		
de huevo, abiertos	3 días	No se congelan bien
no abiertos	10 días	1 año
Mayonesa		
Comercial, refrigerar después de su apertura	2 meses	No se congela
Comidas listas congeladas		
Mantener congeladas hasta el momento de usarse	—	3 a 4 meses
Productos de la fiambrería y productos envasados al vacío		
Ensaladas de huevos, pollo, jamón, atún, macarrones, preparado comercialmente (o hecho en casa)	3 a 5 días	No se congelan bien
"Hot dogs" y fiambres		
"Hot dogs"		
envase abierto	1 semana	1 a 2 meses
envase cerrado	2 semanas	1 a 2 meses
Fiambres,		
envase abierto	3 a 5 días	1 a 2 meses
envase cerrado	2 semanas	1 a 2 meses
Tocino & salchichas		
Tocino	7 días	1 mes
Salchichas, crudas, de pollo, pavo, cerdo, res	1 a 2 días	1 a 2 meses
Chorizos ahumados para desayuno, croquetas	7 días	1 a 2 meses
Salchichas duras— salchichón	2 a 3 semanas	1 a 2 meses
Salchichas con etiqueta "Manténgase refrigerado"		
abierta	3 semanas	1 a 2 meses
cerrada	3 meses	1 a 2 meses
Jamón, cecina de res		
Cecina de res, en bolsa con jugos de encurtir	5 a 7 días	Seco, 1 mes
Jamón, enlatado—con etiqueta "Manténgase Refrigerado"		
abierto	3 a 5 días	1 a 2 meses
cerrado	6 a 9 meses	No se congela
Jamón, completamente cocido, envasado al vacío en la planta, sin fecha, cerrado	2 semanas	1 a 2 meses

Producto	Refrigeradora (40 °F)	Congelador (0 °F)
Jamón, cecina de res (Continuación)		
Jamón, completamente cocido, envasado al vacío en la planta, con fecha, cerrado	"consumir antes de" fecha en el envase	1 a 2 meses
Jamón completamente cocido—entero	7 días	1 a 2 meses
Jamón, completamente cocido—mitad	3 a 5 días	1 a 2 meses
Jamón, completamente cocido—tajadas	3 a 4 días	1 a 2 meses
Carne fresca de ternera, res, cordero, cerdo		
Hamburguesa y carne picada	1 a 2 días	3 a 4 meses
Pavo, ternera, cerdo, cordero molidos y mezclas de éstos	1 a 2 días	3 a 4 meses
Carne fresca de ternera, res, cordero, cerdo		
Filetes	3 a 5 días	6 a 12 meses
Chuletas	3 a 5 días	4 a 6 meses
Asados	3 a 5 días	4 to 12 meses
Vísceras—lengua, hígado, corazón, riñones, menudillos	1 a 2 días	3 a 4 meses
Chuletas de cerdo, de cordero o pechuga de pollo, crudas, rellenas	1 día	No se congelan bien
Sopas y guisos		
Con verduras o carne	3 a 4 días	2 a 3 meses
Sobras de carne		
Carne cocida y guisos de carne	3 a 4 días	2 a 3 meses
Salsa y caldo de carne	1 a 2 días	2 a 3 meses
Aves frescas		
Pollo o pavo, entero	1 a 2 días	1 año
Pollo o pavo, en presas	1 a 2 días	9 meses
Menudillos	1 a 2 días	3 a 4 meses
Aves cocidas		
Pollo frito	3 a 4 días	4 meses
Guisos de pollo, cocidos	3 a 4 días	4 a 6 meses
Presas, solas	3 a 4 días	4 meses
Presas cubiertas con caldo o salsa	1 a 2 días	6 meses
Trocitos de pollo, croquetas	1 a 2 días	1 a 3 meses
Pizza	3 a 4 días	1 a 2 meses
Relleno — cocido	3 a 4 días	1 meses