



Question of the Week

Q: I'm planning a holiday open house. What can I do to make sure the food on the buffet table stays safe to eat?

A: Start with clean hands and equipment. Proper hand washing is the most effective way to keep food and guests safe. Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water following restroom use, after handling raw meat products, and before eating. Keep hot foods hot at 140°F. or warmer, and cold foods cold at 40°F. or colder. Be sure to use a food thermometer (the only safe way to ensure proper temperature) to check temperatures. Keep cold foods refrigerated until just before serving or place plates of cold food on ice to retain the chill. Hot food can be kept warm in a 200°F. oven. If you're not sure how quickly the food will be eaten, put out small platters of food. Replace empty platters with new, freshly filled ones. Remember the "Two-Hour Rule." Throw out perishable food that has been at room temperature for more than two hours.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension's Family, Home & Garden Education Center Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., and W 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., or e-mail us at answers@unh.edu

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