

NUTRITION NIBBLES

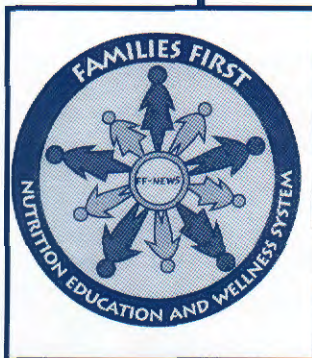
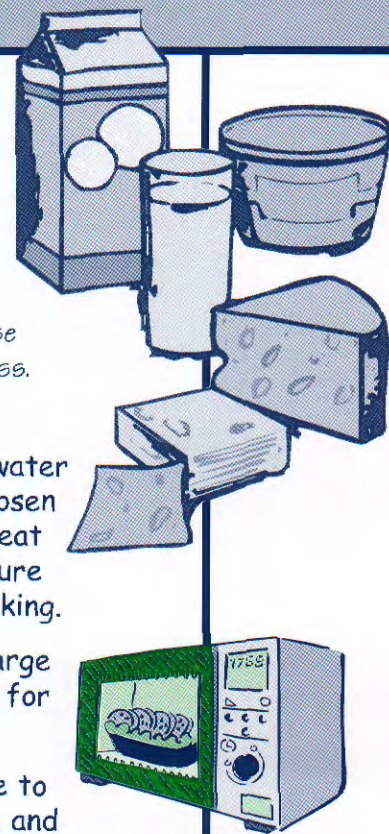
FAMILIES FIRST: NUTRITION EDUCATION AND WELLNESS SYSTEM

Microwave Cooking

Microwave ovens can play an important role at mealtime, but special care must be taken when cooking or reheating meat, poultry, fish, and eggs to make sure they are prepared safely. Microwave ovens can cook unevenly and leave "cold spots," where harmful bacteria can survive. For this reason, it is important to use the following safe microwaving tips to prevent foodborne illness.

Safe Microwave Oven Cooking

- Arrange food items evenly in a covered dish and add water if needed. Cover the dish with a lid or plastic wrap; loosen or vent the lid or wrap to let steam escape. The moist heat that is created will help destroy harmful bacteria and ensure uniform cooking. Cooking bags also provide safe, even cooking.
- Do not cook large cuts of meat on high power (100%). Large cuts of meat should be cooked on medium power (50%) for longer periods.
- Stir or rotate food midway through the microwaving time to eliminate cold spots where harmful bacteria can survive and for more even cooking.
- When partially cooking food in the microwave oven to finish cooking on the grill or in a conventional oven, it is important to transfer the microwaved food to the other heat source immediately.
- Use a food thermometer or the oven's temperature probe to verify the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature. Cooking times may vary because ovens vary in power and efficiency.
- Cook foods to the following safe minimum internal temperatures:
 - Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops may be cooked to 145 °F.
 - All cuts of pork to 160 °F.
 - Ground beef, veal and lamb to 160 °F.
 - Egg dishes, casseroles to 160 °F.
 - Leftovers to 165 °F.
 - Stuffed poultry is not recommended. Cook stuffing separately to 165 °F.
 - All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F.



Cooking whole, stuffed poultry in a microwave oven is not recommended. The stuffing might not reach the temperature needed to destroy harmful bacteria.