

Smart Choices

Nutrition News for Seniors

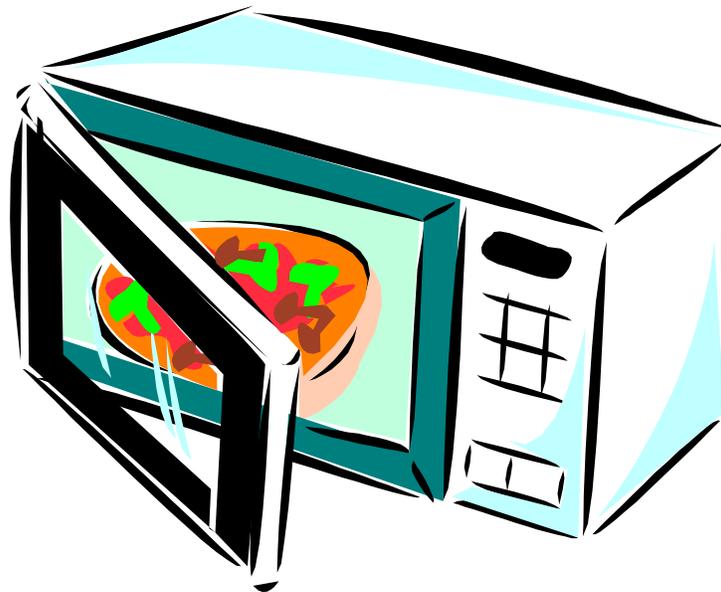
Prepared By: Cathy Agan, Extension Agent (FNP)
Terri Crawford, Extension Agent (Nutrition)

Microwave Tips

Microwave cooking is very different from cooking in an electric or gas oven. Your microwave is especially handy for cooking vegetables, rice, ground meat, fish, and sauces. It is also great for defrosting and reheating foods.

The higher the microwave wattage (power), the faster it will cook. Use the cookbook that came with your microwave for recipes tested for its wattage. For other recipes, you may need to adjust the cooking time based on the wattage of your microwave oven. The amount of time it takes to cook food increases as the amount of food increases. For example if one potato takes 4 minutes to bake, two potatoes will take 6 to 8 minutes.

For food safety, cover food that you cook in the microwave. You will want to use a tight-fitting cover on foods you want to steam such as rice, broccoli, or corn on the cob. Cover foods such as leftovers with a paper towel (not made from recycled paper) to hold heat in but not steam foods. Remove covers and wraps from heated foods carefully.



bowls, glass measuring cups, and casseroles and plastics labeled microwave safe. Don't run the microwave oven when it is empty as this can damage the oven. Microwave ovens can cause hot spots in foods. Therefore, you should stir foods prior to serving. To make sure you heat the food to 165 degrees F, stir and rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking or use a turntable if your

microwave has one. Some microwave recipes may call for standing time after the dish has been microwaved to allow the heat to continue to distribute and finish cooking the dish. Keep your microwave oven clean since a dirty oven will increase cooking time.

Allow steam to escape away from your hands and face. If you thaw meats in the microwave oven, be sure to cook them right after thawing. Partially cooked food reaches the temperature at which bacteria grows, not the temperature that kills it. In other words, it will be in the "temperature danger zone." Use a meat thermometer to ensure that meats are cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy any harmful bacteria that may be in the food.

You should only use cookware that is safe for use in microwave oven. Choose containers that are labeled "microwave safe". Microwave safe containers include glass mixing

In this Issue:

- Microwave Tips
- Old Fashioned Bread Pudding
- Cooking Vegetables
- What's the Purpose of SNAP?

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

Old Fashioned Bread Pudding

Ingredients:

5 slices wheat bread
2 tablespoons margarine or butter
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/3 cup sugar, white or brown
1/2 cup raisins

3 eggs or 1 egg plus 2 egg whites
1 1/2 cups nonfat milk
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract



Directions:

Spread one side of bread with margarine or butter. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Cut into 1-inch cubes. In lightly sprayed microwave safe casserole dish, combine bread, sugar, and raisins. In bowl, blend eggs, milk, salt, and vanilla. Pour liquid over bread mixture; lightly blend. Cover, microwave on HIGH for 5 minutes. Turn dish 1/4 turn. Microwave on HIGH for 3 to 5 minutes longer (pudding is done when edges are firm and center is almost set). Let sit covered for 10 minutes before serving. Serve warm or cold. Refrigerate leftovers.

Serves: 6 Each serving contains: 230 calories, 7 g total fat, 1.5 g saturated fat, 36 g carbohydrates, 1 g dietary fiber, 7 g protein, 340 mg sodium.

Cooking Vegetables



Corn:

Corn on the cob can be microwaved in the husk (remove silks before cooking) or wrapped in plastic wrap. Cook two ears on high for 6 to 7 minutes.

Sliced Carrots:

Place 2 cups thinly sliced carrots in a microwave safe 1-quart casserole. Add 1/4 cup water. Cover. Microwave 4 to 6 minutes, stirring once if needed. Drain. Add small amount of margarine, salt, and pepper.

Broccoli:

Divide one bunch of broccoli into individual spears. Cut off 1 to 1 1/2 inches from tough ends. Place in microwave safe baking dish. Arrange broccoli with heads toward center of dish. Add 1/4 cup water. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on high 6 to 8 minutes.

Potatoes:

Scrub potatoes well and pierce with a fork. When cooking 3 or more potatoes, arrange potatoes in a circle. Cook on high for 4 minutes for one potato. Add 3 minutes for each additional potato. Turn potatoes halfway through cooking time.

What's the Purpose of SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP is about helping people with limited incomes improve their nutrition for better health and disease prevention. The program is available to all eligible persons. Food Stamp coupons have been replaced by an electronic SNAP card that looks and works just like a typical debit or credit card used by any grocery shopper. This program can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact 1-888-LA HELPU or visit www.dss.state.la.us.

