



K-State Extension Connection

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Slow Cooker Food Safety Tips

Now that schedules are busier than ever, wouldn't you like a meal that's waiting for you when you arrive home? A slow cooker can offer great tasting, inexpensive, nutritious meals that require little preparation time. Check the library or go online for slow cooker recipes for roasts, soups, stews and even desserts!



Read on for a guide to safe food handling when preparing slow cooker meals.

- Thaw foods to be used. If you prepare ingredients ahead of time, store them separately in the refrigerator. Never reheat leftovers in the slow cooker.
- Preheat the slow cooker before adding ingredients, or cook on the highest heat setting for the first hour.
- Place any non-leafy vegetables (such as potatoes or carrots) at the bottom and sides of the slow cooker, near the heat, since they will cook slower than other ingredients.
- Cut meat and poultry into chunks or small pieces. This will ensure rapid heat transfer. Avoid adding large pieces of meat, such as a whole chicken or roast.
- When cooking meat or poultry, almost cover the ingredients with water or broth. This will ensure effective heat transfer throughout the crock.
- Use the right amount of food. Fill your slow cooker from half to two-thirds full.
- Do not remove the lid or cover while the food is still cooking. Each time the lid is lifted, the internal temperature drops 10 to 15 degrees and the cooking process is slowed by 30 minutes.

- Use a food thermometer to test meat doneness. Poultry should reach 165 degrees F. and ground meats should reach 160 degrees F. Pork and beef cuts should reach 145 degrees F. and then rest for at least 3 minutes.
- Do not let cooked food cool in the crock. Refrigerate leftovers in covered, shallow containers within 2 hours.

For additional information, contact the Wildcat Extension District, Crawford County, 620-724-8233, Labette County, 620-784-5337, Montgomery County, 620-331-2690, Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Our website is <http://www.wildcatdistrict.k-state.edu/> or follow us on Facebook: Wildcat Extension District.

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