

# DIRECTIONS NEWSLETTER

## NOVEMBER 2017

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### 7 Tips for Cleaning Fruits and Vegetables

Federal health officials estimate that nearly 48 million people are sickened by food contaminated with harmful germs each year, and some of the causes might surprise you.

Although most people know animal products must be handled carefully to prevent illness, many do not realize that produce can also be the culprit in outbreaks of foodborne illness. In recent years, the United States has had several large outbreaks of illness caused by contaminated fruits and vegetables—including spinach, tomatoes, and lettuce.

Glenda Lewis, an expert on foodborne illness with the Food and Drug Administration, says fresh produce can become contaminated in many ways. During the growing phase, fruits and veggies may be contaminated by animals, harmful substances in the soil or water, and poor hygiene among workers. After produce is harvested, it passes through many hands, increasing the contamination risk. Contamination can even occur after the produce has been purchased, during food preparation, or through inadequate storage.

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FDA says to choose produce that isn't bruised or damaged, and make sure that pre-cut items—such as bags of lettuce or watermelon slices—are either refrigerated or on ice both in the store and at home. In addition, follow these recommendations:

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh produce.
- Cut away any damaged or bruised areas before preparing or eating.
- Gently rub produce while holding under plain running water. There is no need to use soap or a produce wash.
- Wash produce BEFORE you peel it, so dirt and bacteria are not transferred from the knife onto the fruit or vegetable.
- Use a clean vegetable brush to scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers.
- Dry produce with a clean cloth or paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present.
- Throw away the outermost leaves of a head of lettuce or cabbage.

Lewis says consumers should store perishable produce in the refrigerator at 40 degrees or below.

### 2018 Youth Garden Grant

KidsGardening.org awards funding and gardening supplies to schools and community organizations with youth-centered garden programs.

Youth Garden Grants are awarded to schools and community organizations with youth-centered garden programs. In evaluating grant applications, priority will be given to programs that demonstrate sustainability, as well as impact in curriculum areas, such as:

Health and nutrition;  
Environmental education; and,  
Entrepreneurship.

Any nonprofit, school, or youth program planning a new garden project or expanding an established one that serves at least 15 youth between the ages of 3-18 is eligible to apply.

Award packages include seeds, tools, gardening supplies, gift certificates, and curriculum materials. Visit [KidsGardening.org](http://KidsGardening.org) for details on prize packages.

Applications are due December 8, 2017!

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### School Nutrition Association - Member Benefits

The School Nutrition Association (SNA) is a national, nonprofit professional organization. SNA is recognized as the authority on school nutrition and has been providing quality education programming since 1946.

SNA works to ensure all children have access to healthy schools meals and nutrition education by:

- Providing members with education and training
- Setting standards through certification and credentialing programs
- Shares regulatory, legislative, industry, nutritional and other types of information related to school nutrition

Members have access to:

- Educational webinars
- School Nutrition magazine
- Newsletter
- National membership also includes membership for North Dakota School Nutrition Association (NDSNA) who sponsors a state conference each year. This year's conference is June 5-7, 2018 in Bismarck

Membership Fees:

School Nutrition Employees - SNA \$33 + NDSNA \$8.25

School Nutrition Managers - SNA \$35 + NDSNA \$8.25

District Director/Supervisor - SNA \$120 + NDSNA \$8.25

[Join the School Nutrition Association.](#)

### Milk Waste = \$\$\$\$\$\$\$

School Lunch and Breakfast meal patterns require that milk be offered as part of each meal. However, students are not required to take milk as part of their meal. As long as a student has three food components on their tray and one component is a fruit or vegetable, the meal is reimbursable.

We have found several instances of school staff (not food service staff) forcing students to take milk. The staff in question yell out "Take your milk", which scares young students into taking a carton of milk even when they do not want it. Ultimately, the student does not drink the milk, and it is wasted. Milk costs between 19-52 cents a carton. That is a lot of money to throw away.

In addition, consider the additional trash and mess in the cafeteria. Some schools have reported that students compete in splash contests to see who can create the widest splash when dumping unused milk in a bucket.

The solution is simple: do not require students to take milk if they do not want it.

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### Save the Date for 2018 Back-to-School Workshops

Bismarck-August 7, 8, 9

Fargo-August 14, 15, 16

We are still working on developing sessions. The first day and last day will most likely be the same sessions presented again with the middle day for extras, like Sanitation Update.

### National School Breakfast Week March 5-9, 2018

It may seem like a long time away but March 5-9, 2018 will be here before we know it! The theme this year is "I Heart School Breakfast." What will you do to get students to love school breakfast?!? Take the challenge and start planning today!

### NDSNA Conference June 5-7, 2018 at the Ramkota in Bismarck

Joe Oster is planning the 2018 North Dakota School Nutrition (NDSNA) Conference. He has booked Dr. Katie Wilson, past USDA Under Secretary, and Sarah White, past Tennessee State Director as speakers. Both have many years of great experience in school nutrition and a very effective manner of presenting information with amusing stories.

### University of North Dakota To Provide School Nutrition Training

The University of North Dakota provides a variety of two hour CE (continuing education) courses that will assist you in meeting required Professional Development training hours. Participants may select any course from the menu. Each course is offered online for \$20 per course. You may sign up anytime and work at your own pace.

Menu of Courses:

- Bone Up With Calcium
- Create a Great Plate
- Creating An Allergy Friendly Kitchen
- Fresh Ideas in Meal Planning
- Reaction Time: Response to Food Allergies
- Shake the Salt Habit
- So You Have to Be Gluten Free?
- Zone Defense: Up Your Game in Food Safety

[Learn more about courses](#), or call 701-777-0488 to register.

### Whole Grain Requirements

The whole grain flexibility does not remove the requirement to serve whole grain rich items. Schools can ask for a waiver for **some** items. At least half of the grain items served still need to be whole grain rich. Please check your menus to ensure that half of the grain items offered every week are whole grain rich. If you are serving **any** non-whole grain items, you must have an approved Whole Grain Waiver on file. If you need a waiver form please contact Deb Egeland at [degeland@nd.gov](mailto:degeland@nd.gov)

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### Water Requirement

Schools are required to offer water at every meal. Please be sure the water is easily available, cold and can be taken to the lunchroom tables to enjoy with the meal.

Some schools offer water in small disposable bottles costing 7-10 cents. This is not necessary; however, those schools tend to have less wasted milk. Water is an extra food that does not count as a meal component. Students cannot be forced to choose between water and milk; they must be allowed to select both. However, very few actually do take both.

### USDA School Foods Update

November/December 2017

#### Pre-Annual Food Survey

Keep an eye out for the Pre-Annual Food Survey. The survey will be available through Survey Monkey sometime in December. This survey is a pre-survey to the annual food survey. The survey will allow schools to choose their food preferences from the full USDA food catalog and helps us narrow down the USDA food choices before the annual survey. You will have to choose which foods in each food category that you would like to see on the annual food survey, you will not have to provide cases quantities. The link to the survey will be sent to all USDA food reps in ND Foods. Please only fill out one survey per sponsor.

#### ND SNA Industry Conference January 15 & 16, 2018

Save the date for the 2018 Industry Conference! The goal of the industry conference is to bring industry and school food service partners together to gain a better insight into each other roles. This year the focus will be on procurement, bids, specifications and contracts. I will be sending out the registration November 1. We look forward to seeing you there!

#### Monthly Ordering Availability

The [Monthly Ordering Availability](#) is a resource that is available on our website. This provides you with the quantities of USDA foods that are available in the warehouse. The sheet is updated before every food survey.

#### Entitlement Spending

Please monitor your entitlement balances. At this time of year, you should have spent approximately 50% of your brown box funds and approximately 30% of your DOD funds (if you participate). The [entitlement report](#) is available on our website. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Please check our [website](#) for USDA Food information:

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