

## Spring Cleaning for Your Menu!

The snow is gone and the weather is warmer. Is it time to sweep away some old habits and freshen up your menu for spring? Buff up your menu with some tips to improve nutrition and food safety. You might save some time and money, too!



✓ Check the tips you plan to try.

### Freshen up your cupboards and refrigerator

- Arrange your cupboards so the items you bought first are in front.
- Review the package dates.
  - A product past its “expiration” date means it’s lower in quality and may not be safe to eat.
  - The “use by” date is a quality date. A product past its “use by” date usually is safe to eat (if it has been stored properly), but it may be of lower quality.
  - The “sell by” date is used by stores. A product past its “sell by” date usually is safe to eat for several days.
- Check your refrigerator temperature. Is it 40 F or lower? Perishable food, such as milk and leftovers, will spoil quickly if it’s not cold enough.
- Wash, rinse, sanitize and air-dry kitchen surfaces to kill germs. Make your own “sanitizer” by combining about ¾ tsp. chlorine bleach with 1 quart of water.

### Mop up some time- and money-saving tips

- Plan your menus a week at a time. Use store ads to help.
- Keep a grocery list on your refrigerator. When you run low on something, write it down.
- When meat or poultry is on sale in economy-sized packages, buy extra and repackage at home. Freeze in meal-sized portions. Label with the contents and date.
- Check “unit prices” on grocery store shelves to learn price per ounce. Sometimes the larger container isn’t the better deal!
- Prepare two meals or a “double recipe” when you cook. Freeze one for a quick meal later. Label with contents and date.
- When chopping onions or grating cheese, prepare more than the recipe amount. Refrigerate the rest to use in another recipe within a couple of days.

### Polish up some family favorite recipes with ideas to reduce calories and fat

- Use low-fat sour cream or yogurt in place of regular products.
- Serve a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables every day. Buy fresh produce in season.
- Use applesauce to replace half the shortening in recipes for muffins and quick breads.
- Try browning ground beef with no added fat and drain well after cooking. Use nonstick cooking spray or a nonstick pan.

Visit the new Food Wi\$e Web site for information about nutrition, food safety and food budgeting:

[www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise)

I'm making some fruit and vegetable trays for my son's graduation. How long can they safely be on the buffet line?

Perishable food, including cut-up fruits and vegetables, should be at room temperature for only two hours. Be sure to wash the fruits and vegetables with plenty of running water (but no soap) before cutting them.

## SENSATIONAL FIVE-LAYER DINNER

- 2 to 3 medium sliced potatoes
- 2 c. sliced carrots
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 1 lb. browned and drained ground beef
- ½ c. chopped onion
- 1½ c. green beans (canned/drained or frozen)
- 1 can tomato soup

Brown beef with chopped onion; drain. Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease baking pan or casserole dish. Layer ingredients in order given. Cover. Bake for 45 minutes or until tender. Uncover and bake 15 more minutes.

**Variations:** Use peas or corn instead of green beans. Use your favorite cream soup instead of tomato soup.

*Makes six servings.*

*Each serving has about 330 calories, 11 grams fat and 31 grams carbohydrate.*

## Low-cost/free health coverage for kids

Many working families, including families with Indian Health Services, are surprised to learn they are eligible!

- Caring for Children
- SCHIP/Healthy Steps
- Medicaid

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Julie Garden-Robinson, Food and Nutrition Specialist

Contact the local office of the  
NDSU Extension Service  
for more information  
on food and nutrition or  
managing your food dollar.

