



Food Pantries of Centre County



Newsletter—Summer 2014

Serving Centre County residents with food needs.

Community Help Centre (CHC) - Emergency Food Available

CHC emergency food is available 24-hours a day. Call 814-237-5855 or 800-494-2500 for details.

They collaborate with the local food pantries to provide food referrals, as well as emergency food from our pantries.

Eligibility for food pantry services is determined based on location of residence, income guidelines, and frequency of use. CHC food pantry is available when your local food pantry is not open, when food pantry services have been exhausted, and in other critical situations.

Those who have already exhausted their food bank referral and, as a result, ask to use the food pantry repeatedly will be referred to CHCs Basic Needs program for case management and additional services.

Call 814-237-5855 or walk in at 410 South Fraser

Black Bean and Corn Salad

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 cup balsamic vinaigrette salad dressing
- 1/4 tsp. seasoned pepper
- 1/4 tsp. dried cilantro
- 1/8 tsp. ground cayenne pepper
- 1/4 tsp. ground cumin
- 2 (15 ounce) cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 (15 ounce) cans whole kernel corn, drained
- 1/2 cup copped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped green onion
- 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a small bowl, mix together vinaigrette, seasoned pepper, cilantro, cayenne pepper, and cumin. Set dressing aside.
2. In a large bowl, stir together beans, corn, onion, green onions, and red bell pepper. Toss with dressing. Cover, and refrigerate overnight. Toss again before serving.

Bellefonte FaithCentre Food/Pet Pantry

INGREDIENTS:

- 6 medium potatoes, peeled and quartered (can substitute with instant potatoes)
- 1 tablespoon salt (potato water)
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2 tablespoons chives, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt (mashed potatoes)

Protect Yourself from Hidden Produce Pathogens

It's important to wash conventionally grown fruits and vegetables to help remove pesticide residue. So does that mean if you buy organic, you don't have to wash your produce? No! And yet many people make the mistake of biting right into organically grown veggies and fruits without washing them first.

Here's why that thinking is backwards: Ingesting trace amounts of pesticides now and then probably won't hurt you (though you should still try to avoid it). But without proper washing of produce, you run the risk of ingesting a foodborne pathogen, which could be potentially life-threatening.

Foodborne pathogens can be on conventional or organic produce. For example, E. coli bacteria could get onto fruits and vegetables from manure in the soil they were grown in, or from the hands of pickers in the fields or fellow customers in the store.

The CDC estimates 3,000 Americans die from foodborne illnesses every year, including deadly outbreaks in recent years linked to produce like peppers and spinach. But the good news is you can reduce your risk. So whether you buy conventional or organic produce, here are the dos and don'ts for washing it properly.

Do:

Wash under running water: Researchers recommend using water over commercial products and home washing brews. Running water is even better because the action of the water dislodges residues and carries them off of the produce. Bunched fruit like grapes can be placed in a colander and then rinsed with running water. You can increase the friction by rubbing the produce with your (clean) hands.

Scrub with a brush: According to Barbara Rowe of the Utah State University Agricultural Extension service, it's a good idea to use a vegetable brush on root vegetables, melons, cucumbers and citrus fruit because even though we don't typically eat their skins, when you slice through the skin into the pulp of the produce, you can transfer bacteria to the inside.

Peel fruits and vegetables: The EPA suggests peeling fruits and vegetables, when possible, for an added layer of protection against pesticide residue and foodborne pathogens.

Trim outer leaves. The FDA says it's a good idea to trim off the outer leaves of things like lettuce, cabbage and celery, again to remove the outer layer that can contain more germs and residue.

Dry produce: The FDA says one last step is to pat produce dry with a clean towel or a paper towel, which provides one last opportunity for bacteria and pesticide residues to come off.

Don't:

Use soap: Neither the USDA nor the FDA recommends washing fruits and vegetables with soap. That's because soap hasn't been tested or approved for human consumption. Yes, dish soap goes on dishes, which we eat off of, but fruits and vegetables can absorb soap in a way that dishes cannot. Soap can also change the taste of produce.

Soak produce: Filling a basin with water and soaking produce doesn't work well because the pesticides and germs don't flow away. Soaking in your kitchen sink is even worse because kitchen sinks are infamous for the number of pathogens they harbor from cooking meat, washing dirty hands, etc.

Re-wash pre-washed: According to the FDA, bagged lettuces and pre-cut fruits are already washed in such a way that germs and residues are minimized. The agency says you can re-wash these items if you insist, but warns that you could actually introduce new germs, if you're not careful about safe handling practices.

Exercise Caution:

Store before washing: Colorado State University says washing produce and then refrigerating it can cause bacteria to grow, because the produce is moist and warm from the water. Washing ahead can also cause produce to spoil faster. On the other hand, storing pre-washed produce may help keep your refrigerator contaminant-free and may encourage you to eat more fruits and veggies because they're ready to go. So decide which matters more to you.

Make a produce wash: Dozens of agencies and organizations all say running water is the best cleanser for produce, but if it makes you feel better to use something stronger, you can buy a (non-soap) vegetable and fruit spray or make your own. Spray it on, let it sit five minutes and rinse well with running water. Here's a good recipe:

Ingredients:

1 cup water
1 cup distilled white vinegar
1 tbsp baking soda
1/2 of a lemon

Directions:

Mix the ingredients together in a spray bottle. Spray on produce and be sure to rinse thoroughly before eating.