Message from Project Coordinator

Aloha! Thank you for your continued support for the Hawaii Child Care Nutrition Program (HCCNP), a project funded by the Hawaii Department of Human Services.

This newsletter includes helpful information on how to keep home lunches safe, basic information about common food allergens, in addition to a few, fun food facts and a quick stir-fry recipe. Please let me know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. I can be reached via e-mail at hccnp@hawaii.edu or at (808) 956-4124. We look forward to working together, for the health and safety of our children.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Kanechika
Project Coordinator,
Hawaii Child Care Nutrition Program

Munch on a ‘Food-Safe’ Home Lunch

For parents who pack home lunches for their children, convenience and taste may be their biggest concerns. However, food safety can be an issue because harmful bacteria can multiply rapidly in food when kept in the “Danger Zone” (temperatures between 40-140°F, which include room temperature here in Hawaii).

By following a few tips and strategies, parents and caregivers can strive to keep food brought from home, safe by cooking, packing and handling perishable items safely. Share these tips with your parents:

- Be careful when buying and preparing perishable foods, as they should not be left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- Always wash your hands for at least 20 seconds before handling food.
- Do not reuse packaging, like disposable bags because it could contaminate other food.
- Pack only the amount of perishable foods that can be eaten at lunch to avoid any perishable leftovers.
- Use insulated lunch boxes or bags to help keep foods cold.
- Use ice packs or freeze water bottles or juice boxes for ‘home-made’ ice packs.
- Freeze sandwiches overnight, but add the veggies and condiments right before packing the lunch since these items do not freeze well.
- At your day care home, keep home lunches / coolers in a refrigerator.

Note that some foods are considered safe when stored at room temperature:

- Peanut butter
- Nuts
- WHOLE fruits and veggies

- Unopened canned fruit
- Breads
- Crackers
Menu Planning tip: Common Food Allergens

Do you have children who are allergic to certain foods, like peanuts or milk? If so, you know from experience that it can sometimes be tricky to prepare safe meals and snacks for these children.

To help consumers avoid foods that may be unsafe for those with food allergies, Congress passed the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 requiring that package labels must clearly identify the eight most common food allergens in their products’ ingredient lists. This law applies to all foods whose labeling is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. Do you know what the eight most common food allergens are in the United States? Try this exercise and fill in the blanks to see what they are:

1) M __ K
2) __ G G
3) F __ S H
4) W H __ A T
5) C R __ S T A C E __ N S H E __ L F I S __ (example: shrimp)
6) T __ E E N __ T S (example: almonds, walnuts)
7) P E __ N U __ S
8) S O __ B E __ N S

The correct answers can be found on the bottom of page 4. Because there is no cure for food allergies, strict avoidance, early recognition and management of symptoms are extremely important. For more information about the labeling law and about food allergies, please visit the FDA website at www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/FoodAllergens/default.htm

Free Menu Reviews!

Would you like to assure your children’s parents that the meals and snacks you serve are balanced and nutritious?

If your program is not enrolled in the USDA Child and Adult Care food program and you are interested in getting your menus reviewed free of charge, please contact Kimberly at hccnp@hawaii.edu or at (808) 956-4124. Our program can assist you and provide suggestions as you create or work to improve your menu.

Our website has menu planning templates and helpful guides on recommended portions for young children. Feel free to browse our many menu planning resources if you need some tips or ideas: www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/NEW/HCCNP/fccp.htm
Do you know if your rice is creditable?

What kind of rice do you serve at your center? Rice falls under the grain component group when served with meals and snacks. However, as with all grains, in order to be credited, it should consist primarily of whole grain or enriched flour or meal. What does that mean?

Whole grains are the least processed form of grains and generally contain all 3 parts of the kernel of grain: bran, endosperm and germ. Each of the 3 parts of the grain kernel contains various important nutrients.

Brown rice is a whole grain and is considered creditable.

However, many whole grains, including brown rice, go through a refinement process that removes the bran and germ parts of the kernel. By removing those parts, many of the nutrients are also removed.

White rice is considered a refined grain and is not creditable.

Some refined grains, including white rice, are enriched with some of the nutrients, such as some vitamins and minerals that were initially lost during the refinement process.

Enriched rice is the enriched version of white rice, and is considered creditable.

Is the rice that you serve at your center creditable?

Fun Fruit Facts—MANGO!

Mango season is right around the corner here in Hawaii, starting in March, running through November.

These fruits, which are thought to be native to India, come in over 1,000 varieties with varying shapes like round, oval and kidney-shaped.

When picking or shopping for mango, choose ones that smell sweet, are firm and that are starting to show some yellow or red. Note that some varieties remain green when ripe.

Leave unripe mango out at room temperature to ripen, then store in the fridge for up to a week.

Enjoy them as a refreshing snack, in a fruit salad, with cereal, yogurt or blended in a smoothie. You can also make mango bread and share with friends and family.

Not only do they taste great, but they are also a good source of Vitamins A & C as well as potassium! Eat up!

Your Opinion

Do you have questions about meal planning? Need tips for feeding picky eaters? Need ideas for healthy, tasty recipes?

HCCNP would like to hear what nutrition related topics you are interested in learning more about—contact us and let us know! We will try to include such topics in our future newsletters, workshops and other training materials.
Recipe: Chow Fun

Number of servings: 8

Ingredients:
- 5-6 stalks green onion and/OR ½ medium round onion
- ¾ pound lean meat
- 2 (14-ounce) packages refrigerated chow fun noodles
- 2 (9 or 10-ounce) packages chop suey mix and/or bean sprouts
- Optional: sesame seeds, Chinese parsley

Marinade:
- 1 thumb size piece ginger
- 1 tablespoon less sodium soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt

Seasoning:
- 1 thumb size piece ginger
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 3 tablespoons less sodium soy sauce

Directions:
1. SLICE green onion and/OR round onion. SET aside.
2. CRUSH ginger for marinade and seasoning. SET aside.
3. SLICE meat into strips.
4. In a small bowl, MIX marinade ingredients and ADD meat. SET aside.
5. In another small bowl, MIX seasoning ingredients.
6. In a large pot or skillet, SAUTÉ meat until BROWN.
7. ADD chow fun noodles to meat, and MIX.
8. ADD seasoning mixture and vegetables to pot. MIX WELL.
9. STIR-FRY until vegetables are tender but crisp.
10. Optional: ADD sesame seeds and Chinese parsley as garnish.

For more recipes from our Food Skills Cookbook, please visit our website at:
www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/new/resources.htm

Mailing List: Going Green!

Thanks to those who signed up to be on our e-mail listserv!

If you are interested in getting our newsletter via e-mail instead of traditional mail, please e-mail Kim at hccnp@hawaii.edu and provide your name and mailing address.

You can help to conserve our limited resources!

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For the "common food allergy" fill-in-the-blank exercise on page 2:

Answers to "common food allergen":

1) WHEAT
2) EGG
3) FISH
4) MILK
5) CRUSTACEAN SHELLFISH
6) TREE NUTS
7) PEANUTS
8) SOYBEANS