

# Food Safety

## HELPFUL HINTS FROM EXPERTS

### Easy-To-Digest Ways To Prevent Foodborne Illness

(NAPSA)—If you've recently had an upset stomach or spent a few days in bed recovering from what you assumed was the flu, you actually may have been one of 76 million Americans affected every year by foodborne illness—also known as food poisoning.

The good news is that a majority of these cases are preventable if you follow a few simple safety guidelines. To empower Moms and Dads with the information they need to protect their families from foodborne illness, Sargento Foods Inc. created the "Food Safety for Families" campaign.

"Many people don't realize that up to 80 percent of cases of foodborne illness begin inside the home," says Christine Palumbo, R.D., a leading food safety expert and Sargento campaign spokesperson. "Yet millions of cases can be avoided if consumers consistently follow basic food safety guidelines when purchasing, preparing, cooking and storing food."

When shopping for perishable foods, Palumbo recommends paying attention to the packaging. "For example, keep an eye out for packages designed specifically with food safety in mind, such as *Sargento* shredded and cubed cheese packaging with the *Slide-Rite* Advanced Closure System and protective top-seal. It makes opening and closing packages easier, faster and more secure than resealable packages you have to press close."

To avoid foodborne illness, there are other easy-to-follow steps parents can take to protect their families, including the following:

- Prevent "grocery cart contamination" at the supermarket by putting raw meat, fish or poultry in plastic bags.
- Shop for cold and frozen foods last so bacteria will not grow on the way home.
- Always scrub your hands with soap and warm water for a full 20 seconds before and after touching food.
- Thaw food in your refrigerator, microwave or under cold running water—not on the kitchen counter.

## Food Safety for Families



**SARGENTO**  
Just Say Cheese.



**Proper food handling and preparation can help prevent most cases of foodborne illness.**

- Use plastic cutting boards.
- Sanitize kitchen surfaces with hot water, detergent and a sanitizing agent—and remember to replace sponges and brushes often.
- Use a food thermometer to check the doneness of meat instead of relying on color alone.
- Never taste leftovers to see if they are safe. Most food poisoning bacteria cannot be seen, smelled or tasted.

Consumers can obtain a free "Food Safety for Families" brochure offering helpful tips and a fun, educational Food Safety I.Q. Quiz by visiting the Sargento Web site at [www.sargento.com](http://www.sargento.com) or by calling 1-800-CHEESES (1-800-243-3737) between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. CDT, Monday through Friday. Ask for Dept. FS.