



Season 1 Episode 3—Nutrition is Key

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Terence Martin

(Intro with music) This is Food Defender podcast with Dr. Terence Martin, food safety and quality specialist at Alabama Extension at Alabama A&M University. Our Food Defender podcast covers everything that comes to food safety. For example, USDA guidelines, FDA guidelines, and just general consumer safety as it pertains to food.

Terence Martin

Well, hello everyone. Once again, welcome back. Another episode of Food Defenders. I am Dr. Terence Martin, food safety specialist here at Alabama A&M Extension...Alabama. This episode we're going to be talking about nutrition, we're going to talk about nutrition in the fact that food safety is still important even around nutrition. Umm...

This is time of year. We begin to plant in ready to plant fresh fruits and vegetables... Therefore, we right now until its harvest time is we can look at getting frozen, fresh fruits and vegetables, which, I think a lot of time we forget about that has the same amount and nutrition content value. Umm...you know, we always look back and do our research here in Extension.

You know, the Frozen Food Foundation invites you to to take a fresh look at frozen foods. You know, and, you know, it's still hard to follow those four easy steps. Keep it clean, separate, cook, and chill. You know,

those are those always those four steps when it comes to food safety. So around frozen foods or frozen fruits and vegetables, we have to keep that in mind.

Terence Martin

Even this month, if you're using fresh frozen fruits and vegetables, like with smoothies and, uhh...just as a meal, uhh...appetizers; those type thing. Uhh...you know, with freezing being one of our preservation methods, uhh...you know, freezing...it just it just helps out a little bit, when you're trying to preserve something. Umm...and so which helps out, with food safety...you know, freezing is one of the oldest methods of preserving foods and can keep foods for fresh for a long period of time.

Umm...you know, with spring coming in, and the summer getting ready to come in, you're planning fruits and vegetables. You know, this is a good method, uhh...of preservation, that you can use and still not worry about losing your nutritional value of your produce. Umm...freezing is a natural way to keep, you know, food safe and preventing microorganisms from growing and also by slowing down enzymes that causes, you know, fruits and vegetables to go bad early or spoil.

Terence Martin

You know, there's many different techniques, you know, you know, modern freezing techniques to use, like blast freezing, quick freezing with, you know, with it being national, nutrition, it help keep those nutrients real quick and easy without, losing it. Like, sometimes you when you boiling or...those nutrient tend to leak out and so freezing, uh, uh...most definitely is a good opportunity, uhh...for nutrition and for food safety that extend your shelf life of your, of your product. You know, we always just recommend on the food safety side, if you're using frozen foods, or, produce, make sure you read the labe...the package in there and follow the cooking instructions on the back just to make sure that, umm...you're, you're preparing it like it's supposed to be prepared, umm...when you know thawing and right temperature to maintain that food safety and make sure you maintain the quality, of the, of the product.

Terence Martin

You know, so one of the, I want to talk about a couple of tips right here. An important tip to remember is if you can't eat your leftovers, you know, say, bananas, you got extra bananas, you can use chop those bananas up, freeze them before they go bad. You can use them in, smoothies, you know. Or if you have left over from frozen foods, you can also make sure that you you quickly freeze those, that, you know, to a colder temperature, helps slows the bacterial growth, harmful bac- bacterial growth. So, remember, if you have leftover, whether it be frozen food or frozen produce, hey, just, umm...get, cool it down and freeze it as quick as possible.

Umm...you know, so you get a lot of questions sometimes asking about, uhh, the nutrition value of frozen versus fresh. You know, what's say, you know, is there's a different, uhh, with the nutritional value, you know, and then the question is, did you know frozen, frozen fruits and vegetables, are as rich in nutrients.

In many cases are are packed in even higher nutrient levels than fresh counterparts. You know, once they're frozen, you're able to encapsulate, keep that, those nutrients in, you know, in its best state.

Terence Martin

Frozen how fresh how fresh stays accessible. You know, about 40% of the food produced in the United States each year is never eaten. This is according to the Natural Resources Defense Council, amounting to about \$162 billion are lost every year. This is according to the, uhh, USDA. You know, so you have to think about food waste when we talking about frozen foods...frozen, frozen produce that not being used. Wind up costing, and like I say, \$160 billion in losses a year here in America. You know, so if we can use free...freezing methods and, and that sort to, uhh, extend the shelf life and still have a nutrient dense fruits and vegetables, I think that's the route we need to start looking at.

You know, umm, research have shown that, you know, all this wasted food is staggering, considering about 17.5 million of US households are food insecure. So, this may be a way to reduce our food insecurity. You know, by using the freezer method, putting it in the freezer for later use. Uhh, if you got a small garden, you know, you want to make sure...you can use that freezer method to be able to freeze your food and still have the quality.

Terence Martin

And also, you know, just remember using those, uhh, four steps when you're preparing it, you know, for food safety concerns, you know, so that is one of the biggest things that that we want to make sure, especially this month, National Nutrition Month, around food safety. You still got to take precaution when it comes to handling your frozen food, how you're thawing it, how you're refreezing it, how long you leaving it out, umm...you're preparing it. And make sure any, surroundings the countertops and all those things, your hands are clean, utensils. We still have to remember...we still have to use those concepts. You know, a big thing is smoothies. Umm, uhh...with your blenders. If you're not properly cleaning your blenders after each use, you know, your product, your frozen fruits or vegetables can get embedded in those, uhh, blades, and if you're not properly...those gaskets. So, you have to be careful with that. Even though we're promoting frozen foods, uhh, fruits and vegetables, remember those utensils, the equipment that you're using for, like, blending your smoothies. They got to be properly cleaned and sanitized, because once those food particle gets in there, then you worrying about, food, causing foodborne illness because you're not being clean properly.

So, what we do here on food with Food Defenders is we want to give you these tips, uhh, with everything we do, highlight some of the...big events that's going on, like National Nutrition Month, here at Alabama Extension, Alabama A&M. But still want to make sure we give the audience that strong, uhh, scientific knowledge, uhh, food safety and keeping yourself safe whether you're preparing it for yourself, whether you're preparing for your loved ones.

Terence Martin

I think now you have to worry about some of our seniors that may be, like smoothies that can only consume that fruits and vegetables. So, you want to be safe when they get around that? You know, so. And also looking at preservation methods, such as freezing to reduce the food waste, which we tend to do here a lot in America, you know. In fact, you know, research that was published in the British Food Journal shows that frozen food generates 47% less food waste at home than nonfrozen foods, so families can save money while eating healthy meals. So, frozen food is a way to go in and help reduce, uhh, food waste. Uhh, helps the family, uhh, save money, uhh, and you still can get those healthy nutrition meals that, that's adequate for your family when it comes to providing nutrition for your family.

So, just remember that when we're doing this, uhh, thing we call food preservation, just making sure that we're still following those four principles. Because one thing we do know, you can't smell bacteria. You can't taste bacteria. So be mindful, umm, be following the packaging instructions, if you are using frozen foods, uhh...fruits and vegetables, just remind yourself to read those instructions, how to handle it. Whether it be for us...using it for appetizer, side dishes, desserts, your main entrée, frozen foods or frozen fruits and vegetables. Okay.

Terence Martin

(Outro Music) Once again, this is Dr. Terrence Martin with Food Defenders with Alabama Extension at Alabama A&M. Stay safe and knowledgeable of what's going on around you...everything food.