



live well, work well

October 2011

Are You Packing Safe Lunches?



Did you know that the lunches you pack at home could be increasing your chances of getting sick?

Most brown-baggers don't have access to a fridge during the day, so their bagged lunch sits unrefrigerated all morning. Perishable foods – such as leftover casserole, a turkey sandwich or cut vegetables - can warm to unsafe temperatures during that time, even if you use an insulated lunch bag or ice packs. Warmer temperatures allow bacteria to breed, which could cause upset stomachs or even foodborne illness.

Heed the following tips to keep unrefrigerated bagged lunches safe

during the day:

- If you're using an insulated lunch bag, put it in the freezer overnight so that it is cooler to start off the morning.
- When using ice packs to cool your lunch, use two and put one on either side of perishable foods. If using a paper bag, double-bag it.
- Swap perishable foods for ones that don't require refrigeration, such as a peanut butter sandwich instead of deli meat, or an apple in lieu of melon.
- Freeze sandwiches overnight to help them stay cold.
- Foods found on a shelf at the store, such as applesauce or fruit cups, are generally also safe for an un-chilled lunch bag.
- Pack only the amount of food that will be eaten, to avoid leftovers that will be left out unrefrigerated for the rest of the day.
- When preparing lunches, always wash your hands and the counter thoroughly before beginning. Many people forget this step, but it may be the most important for keeping your lunch free of bacteria that can cause illness.

Your Disability Rights

If you have a qualified disability, you have certain rights in the workplace. This means:

- You cannot be discriminated against in any employment practice, including hiring, firing, promotion, compensation, etc.
- You may not be asked if you have a disability
- You may be entitled to special accommodation to your job or work environment if your disability interferes with your ability to do your job

Questions? Contact your supervisor!

DID YOU KNOW?

Under federal law, a disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself and working. For more information on disability rights under federal law, please visit www.eeoc.gov.



Quick Tips to Trim Your Energy Bill

Energy costs continue to rise, but these simple home tips can help maximize your energy spending:

- Turn off anything you're not using – lights, computer, television, radio, etc. Unplug appliances and electronics.



- Swap out standard light bulbs for energy-efficient ones.
- In anticipation of winter, weatherize your home. Use caulk or a weather strip to seal any door or window that leaks air.
- Upgrade the insulation in your attic.
- Use the dishwasher, washer and dryer only for a full load.
- Encourage everyone in the house to take shorter showers.
- Regularly change the filter on your air conditioner.
- Repair leaky faucets immediately.
- Keep the thermostat under 70 degrees in winter (and a few degrees cooler than the outside temperature in summer).
- Turn the heat down (or the air conditioning up) when you are at work during the day or gone for other long periods.

Step Your Way to Better Health

Walking more each day can help you lose weight, reduce your risk of disease and improve overall health, but it can be hard to get in the habit. For some extra motivation, buy a pedometer to count your daily steps. Pedometers make it easy to measure and track your progress each day, particularly for those who struggle to regularly set aside blocks of time for walking.

Start by tracking your steps during a normal day, and set goals to increase your steps each week. Experts recommend striving toward 6,000 to 10,000 steps each day for maximum health benefits. That may sound like a lot, but you don't have to do it all at once! Here are some tips to increase your daily steps:

- Park farther away in parking lots, or a couple blocks from your destination. On a bus or train, get off a stop early.
- Walk around the house while on the phone.
- Take a 10-20 minute walk each day after lunch.
- Always take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Get up and walk around during television commercial breaks.
- Plan activities around walking. Suggest taking a walk with a friend instead of your typical coffee meeting. Take your children, nieces or nephews to the zoo, museum or park.
- Walk while listening to a podcast or audio book – or your favorite music.
- Walk around the mall if the weather is bad. And leave your wallet at home to resist spending temptations!
- Find a walking buddy and hold each other accountable for scheduled walks.

Banana Nut Bread

This simple, nutritious fall treat is courtesy of www.smallstep.gov.

- 1 cup mashed ripe banana
- 1/3 cup low-fat buttermilk
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup margarine
- 1 egg
- 1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly oil 9x5-inch loaf pan. Stir together bananas and buttermilk; set aside. Cream brown sugar and margarine together. Beat in egg. Add banana mixture; beat well. Sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; add to liquid ingredients and stir until well blended. Stir in nuts. Pour into pan. Bake for 50-55 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool for five minutes in pan. Remove from pan and complete cooling on wire rack before slicing.

Serving size = 1/2-inch slice (133 calories each).

