INDIANA'S EMERGENCY FOOD RESOURCE NETWORK

OCTOBER 2025

A Newsletter for the Staff and Volunteers of Emergency Feeding Programs

Ask the Expert:

What Is Soy?

Written by Liz Pfeifer, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics, Fitness and Health '27

If you live in Indiana, you are probably familiar with soybeans, a major crop around the state. The soybean plant is used to make soy, which is an important ingredient in foods like tofu, soy milk, tempeh, and others. The protein in soy may also be removed to make soy protein and used as an ingredient in other foods. The soy protein is a complete protein, which means it contains all nine of the amino acids that our bodies cannot make on their own and that we need to get from food. Although Indiana grows a lot of soybeans, soybeans have been grown in Asia for a longtime and are a very important food in many Asian countries.

Soy is a legume. Other foods that are legumes include beans, peas, and lentils. Soy has many benefits. It is high in many micronutrients like magnesium, potassium, B vitamins, and fiber. Soy milk can be fortified with Vitamin D and calcium. Fermented soy products such as tempeh or miso are cultured with bacteria that can support healthy bacteria in our gut.

Soy is also a common allergen in the United States. Those taking certain medications as well as pregnant individuals should not consume high amounts of soy. However, for most people, soy can be a great way to add more vitamins, minerals, protein, and fiber to the diet.

Sources: https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/soy/
https://www.rogelcancercenter.org/support/symptoms-and-side-effects/cancer-nutrition-services/nutrition-and-prevention/all-about-soy

https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/soy

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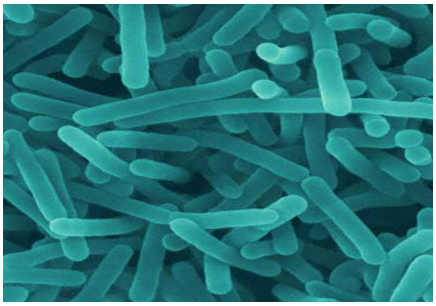
Food Safety: Listeria Bacteria

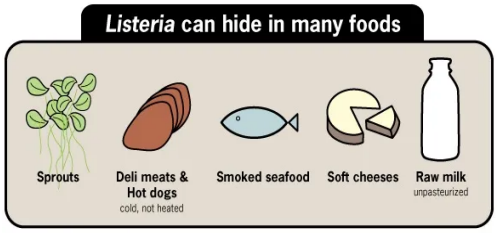
Written by Abigail Rosborough, Purdue University Biomedical Health Sciences and Nutrition Science '26.

Listeria is a bacteria that can cause food poisoning. Listeria can contaminate and grow on many different types of foods and food surfaces: dairy products like soft cheeses and raw milk, raw or undercooked meats, and/or sprouts.



When someone eats a food that has listeria on it, the disease Listeriosis may develop. Listeriosis cannot be passed from person to person, but if you have a weak immune system, are 65 or older, and if you are pregnant, you might be more likely to get listeriosis. The bacterium Listeria mostly contaminates ready-to-eat foods: deli meats, soft cheeses, and hot dogs.

To avoid getting sick from listeria, it is a good idea to set your refrigerator to 40F, stay away from raw dairy or unpasteurized foods, and to clean cooking surfaces and places where you make food.



CDC Vitalsigns™
www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns

Sources: https://uoflhealth.org/articles/what-is-listeria/
https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/foodborne-illness-and-disease/illnesses-and-pathogens/listeria
https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/listeria-infection/symptoms-causes/syc-20355269

Chocolate Peanut Butter Bars

Directions

1. Mix pudding according to package directions, except use 3 1/2 cups milk.
2. Beat in peanut butter with the pudding.
3. Line graham crackers flat on an oven-safe deep dish to cover the bottom.
4. Spread pudding mixture over graham crackers. Top with remaining crackers.
4. Freeze for four hours. Enjoy!

Ingredients (4 servings)

- 2 packages of chocolate pudding, instant (or cook and serve type)
- 3 1/2 cups skim milk*
- 1/4 cup peanut butter*
- 15 graham cracker rectangles

Nutrition Facts (per serving)
Calories: 130
Protein: 4g
Carbs: 20g
Fat: 4g

****foods included in the TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)***

Sources: https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/chocolate-peanut-butter-frozen-

Eating Right:
What Are Processed Foods?

Written by Elaine Wang, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics, Fitness Health '27

Processed foods are simply foods that have been changed from their raw form to a different form, for example, by slicing, cooking, freezing, or adding ingredients. Sometimes processing is used to create a different texture or to put food in a different form like making applesauce out of apples. Other times, ingredients are mixed into a food to make the food more shelf stable or for a certain flavor like putting cucumbers in vinegar to make pickles. Mixing several ingredients together and then heating food are other ways of processing that can make new foods, for example, making bread out of flour, water, salt, and yeast. Processing can also be used to save time, for example freezing foods that are already cooked can make them fast and easy to prepare and serve. Another reason for processing foods is to keep foods safe like pasteurizing, which uses heat to kill the bacteria to make milk safer to drink. Processing is less important to health than the nutrients in the food.

Ultra-processed foods is another word that is used to describe some processed foods. This term is usually used to mean foods that are manufactured and that are very different from their original forms. But one issue with this word is that it is not always clear as to what foods are ultra processed. The best way to know if a food is healthy or not, is to look at the nutrient label on the package and think about the nutrients that are in that food. Try to choose foods with less saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars and to chose foods with more fiber, calcium, vitamin D, and potassium.

Sources: https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/processed-foods https://www.mdanderson.org/cancerwise/7-examples-of-processed-food.h00-159621801.html https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/processed-foods/

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This newsletter is edited by Emma Araya and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

In The News: September 13th is National Peanut Day!

Written by Liz Pfeifer, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics, Fitness and Health '27

On September 13th, we celebrated National Peanut Day. Peanuts are the most popular nuts in the United States! The peanut is packed with 7 grams of protein per serving, over 30 essential vitamins and minerals, healthy fats, and fiber. Peanuts have many uses like in baked goods, flours, oils, and of course, in peanut butter. Most people are regular consumers of peanut butter and it has been an affordable and well-loved food for many years.

The origins of this holiday come from a celebration of agriculture and culture of the nut. Historical figures such as George Washington Carver, who found new uses for the peanut, as well as Jimmy Carter and Thomas Jefferson, two presidents who were past peanut farmers, inspired the start of this holiday. From nutrition to culture, there are plenty of reasons to celebrate the peanut!

Sources: https://nationalpeanutboard.org/news/10-facts-prizes-to-celebrate-national-peanut-day/