

**Family Living
Focus**

by
Lancaster Co.
Extension Agent

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**MICROWAVING CAN HELP
BUSY PEOPLE WITH
BETTER NUTRITION**

Although I like to do conventional cooking that warms up the kitchen on a cold day, those pots and pans produced take a lot of the enjoyment away. Time spent over the stove and sink could be spent with friends and family doing other activities like ice skating, reading, or craft projects.

Fortunately, a microwave oven can help to shorten the hours spent in food preparation and clean-up. Better nutrition for the family and lower electric utility bills can also be payoffs to microwave use.

Better Nutrition:

Lowfat foods cook easily in a microwave. Chicken cooks tender and juicy in a short time. Fish can be steamed or cooked until just the outer areas are done; the center will finish cooking as it stands. Fat added to recipes to prevent sticking to the pan can be omitted.

Vegetables, whether they are

frozen, canned or fresh, are easy to cook in a microwave. A crisp-tender texture for cooked fresh or frozen vegetables can be reached by using the minimum cooking time recommended for a particular microwave.

Milk-based desserts like puddings and custards help supply the family's daily requirement for calcium. Microwaving makes them easy to prepare by eliminating much of the stirring.

Time for Microwaving:

The time required for microwaving of food depends on the temperature of the food before heating, the amount of food in the microwave oven at the time, the density of the food, and the power level (watts) used for microwaving. Small quantities of food usually cook in less time than larger quantities. (Two baked potatoes take twice as long as one)

Microwaves cause water, sugar, and fat molecules under the surface of the food to heat up. The

heat is then transferred toward the center and back out to the surface of the food. Foods continue cooking while standing after they are microwaved, so 5 minutes of standing can be added on to the preparation time.

Tip for Microwaving:

Use microwave-safe utensils, glass or plastic.

Use a large enough container to prevent spillover.

Cheese and meat are foods that attract microwave energy and should be buried when possible, in sauce or other ingredients.

Milk-based foods boil more vigorously in microwave heating. Use a lower power setting and watch carefully or use a temperature control probe set to 180°F. Use a container that is double the size of the food.

Turn or stir foods once or twice during the microwave cooking time for more even cooking.

Set the time for 1/2 of the total cooking time needed; turn or rotate the food so the food formerly in the back is in the front. Reset to cook for the remainder of the cooking time.

Utensils For Microwaving:

Oven glassware and glass-ceramic.

Paper and styrofoam plates and cups.

Paper towels and napkins, wax paper.

Boilable hard and soft plastic.

Plastic wrap for covering dishes, cooking bags for cooking, plastic storage bags for heating at lower temperatures.

Straw and wood (for short term heating).

Boxes lined with paper or plastic, paper or plastic packages (be sure no foil-lined paper is used).

Note: Round containers heat more evenly than those with corners.

Do not use: Dishes with gold, silver, or metallic trim or glaze. Utensils with metal trim or parts. Metal pans, metal skewers, or other metal.

Foods That Microwave Well

Vegetables (Pierce whole vegetables; for winter squash, take a plug out.)

Baked potato (Pierce with a fork before microwaving.)

Puddings and custards

Fruit desserts (Pierce skins of whole fruits.)

Foods to be defrosted

Scrambled eggs

Leftover foods to be reheated

Fish

Casseroles, soup

Chicken pieces (Skin will not be crispy.)

Foods That Do Not Microwave Well Or Are Cooked Less Efficiently By Microwave:

Large size foods like a 25-pound turkey or a dozen baked potatoes.

Eggs in shells and whole boiled eggs without shells

Deep fat frying of foods

Pancakes (unless reheating previously cooked pancakes)

Microwave Safety

Microwave ovens produce very short radio waves to heat food on the inside instead of the conventional heat transfer from oven air or from the bottom of a hot pan. The waves are invisible and can cause damage to hands, so microwave ovens have safety features to prevent release of waves while the door is open and to prevent leaking of waves from the door while closed. Safe operation of a microwave includes maintaining a clean seal around the door and avoiding its use if there is damage to the door or the seals.

Who's The Outstanding Dairy Promoter?

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program is seeking nominations for the fifth annual "Promoter of the Year" award.

Pennsylvania Dairy originated the award to identify those individuals who work to improve the public's perception about dairy products and the dairy industry. By developing the award, Pennsylvania Dairy acknowledges the tremendous support that these hard-working volunteers provide to the entire dairy promotion effort.

Anyone can nominate someone for the award. Judging is based upon the nominee's dairy industry activities and community service.

The winner receives an engraved plaque and a \$100 cash award at Pennsylvania Dairy's 1995 annual meeting, held on February 14, in State College.

Nominations for the "Promoter of the Year" award are due into the Pennsylvania Dairy office by December 31, 1994. A nomination form is required and can be obtained by calling the Pennsylvania Dairy office at (717) 787-6903.

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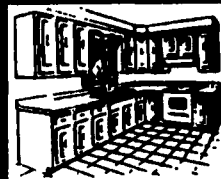


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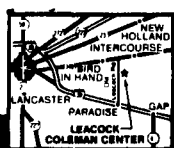
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