

# AGENCY AND ADVOCACY UPDATE



July, 2010

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK OF LEHIGH VALLEY AND NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA IS A PROGRAM OF COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY



## July, 2010



## Happy 4th of July!

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### DATES TO REMEMBER:

**July 1st and 2nd**– The Food Bank will be closed for inventory.

**July 5th**– The Food Bank will be closed to observe Independence Day.

If your standing appointment falls on any of these days, please call the Food Bank at 610-434-0785 to reschedule.

## News You Can Use

### New Source of Help

If you have program participants in need of furniture or other home furnishings, there is a new resource that can help. The Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot is open Tuesdays and Saturdays from 9AM to 3PM for pick up.

Goods available at the LV Outreach Depot may include: household furniture, small appliances, business furniture and equipment and disaster relief kits - health kits, cleaning buckets, school kits, birthing kits, etc. Supplies are donated by churches and other charitable organizations located throughout the Lehigh Valley.

Referrals must come from agency representatives (case managers, etc.) or pastors, rabbis, etc. For more information, please contact LV Outreach Depot at 610-861-7373.

### 2010-2011 Self-Declaration of Need

As of this writing, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has not published new poverty guidelines for 2010. This means that the 2009-10 guidelines **remain in effect** until further notice.

Please continue to use the 2009-10 guidelines (and forms as appropriate) for distribution of TEFAP (USDA commodities) State Food, and CSFP (senior boxes). As soon as new guidelines are published, SHFB will forward them to our member agencies.

### Civil Rights Compliance

PA Department of Agriculture requires that all agencies distributing State Food Purchase Program product or TEFAP product receive Civil Rights Compliance training. Maria, Agency Relations Coordinator, will be calling those agencies that have not completed the training to schedule a session.

### Food Safety Training

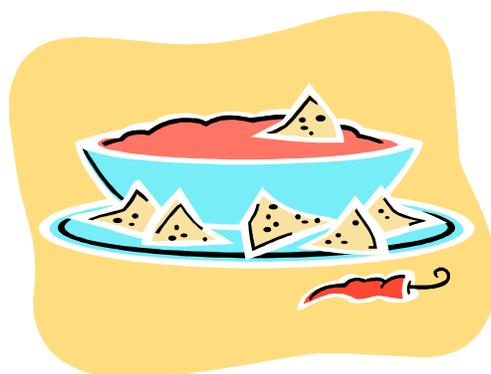
Feeding America requires that all agencies receiving donated product be trained in very basic food safety procedures including storage, pest control, temperature control, and other aspects of food safety designed to prevent food borne illness. If someone currently on your staff has attended the basic training offered by SHFB, or received training through another organization, your agency meets Feeding America's requirements. However, if a representative from your agency received training through another organization, please provide your certificate or a statement on your organization letterhead stating the person(s) trained, the date training was completed, and the agency providing the training by July 31, 2010. Second Harvest will be offering training sessions in the near future for any agency who needs to undergo the training. Please stay tuned for dates and times of future training opportunities.

## Cooks' Corner

# Cheesy Corn Salsa

### Ingredients:

- 1 can (about 15 ounces) tomatoes, drained
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1 can (about 15 ounces) corn, drained
- ¼ cup lemon juice (or lime juice)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ½ cup reduced-fat cheddar cheese, shredded

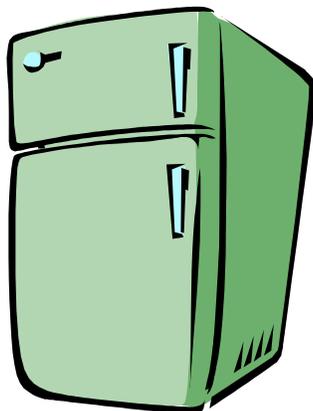


### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, add all ingredients and stir well.
2. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour or until ready to serve.

### Tip:

Serve as a topping for chicken or fish, or as a dip with tortilla chips



Nutritional Information for 1 serving of Cheesy Corn Salsa (about ¼ cup)	
Calories	60
Calories from Fat	30
Total Fat	3g
Saturated Fat	1g
Cholesterol	5mg
Sodium	180 mg
Total Carbohydrate	6g
Dietary Fiber	1g
Sugar	2g
Protein	3g
Vitamin A	11 RAE
Vitamin C	4mg
Calcium	76 mg
Iron	1mg

## Why Does the USDA Recommend Using a Food Thermometer?



***Because you can't tell if food has reached a safe internal temperature just by looking at it.***

Is it done yet? How do you know when your hamburger is done? Because it's brown in the middle? Looking at the color of the food is not enough—you have to use a food thermometer to be sure.

According to USDA research, 1 out of every 4 hamburgers turns brown in the middle before it has reached a safe internal temperature. The only way to be sure food is safely cooked is to use a food thermometer to measure

the internal temperature.

***Because it helps you to avoid overcooking.***

Using a food thermometer not only keeps you safe from harmful food bacteria but it also helps you to avoid overcooking, keeping your food juicy and flavorful.

***Because it reduces the risk of foodborne illness.***

Just like washing your hands before you prepare a meal, you should get into the habit of checking the internal temperature of food, especially meat, poultry and egg dishes. Using a food thermometer is the only sure way of knowing if your food has reached a high enough temperature to destroy foodborne bacteria.

### Tips for using a food thermometer

- Use an instant-read thermometer to check the internal temperature toward the end of the cooking time, but before the food is expected to be done.
- Insert the food thermometer into the thickest part of the food, making sure it doesn't touch bone, fat or gristle.
- Compare your thermometer reading to the Recommended Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures chart included in this Update to determine if your food has reached a safe temperature.
- Make sure to clean your food thermometer with hot, soapy water before and after each use.

Thermometers come in all shapes and sizes—digital probes for the oven and microwave, dial oven-safe and even disposable temperature indicators. For more information about the different types of thermometers and how to use them, checkout the USDA's webpage at <http://www.foodsafety.gov> or call the Food Bank.

We encourage you to use a food thermometer whenever you're cooking meat, poultry, and even egg dishes. It's the only reliable way to make sure you are preparing a safe and delicious meal for your family.



**Remember, "It's Safe to Bite When the Temperature's Right!"**

## Protecting Yourself From Food Allergies

If you or a member of your family suffer from food allergies, you must protect yourself at all times. While some allergies are just irritating, approximately 30,000 Americans go to the emergency room each year to get treated for severe food allergies.

### What is a food allergy?

It is a specific type of adverse food reaction involving the immune system. The body produces an allergic antibody to a food. Once a specific food is eaten and binds with the antibody, an allergic response occurs. A **food allergy** is not the same as a **food intolerance** or other non-allergic food reactions. A **food intolerance** is an abnormal response to a food or additive, but it does not involve the immune system. Compared to food intolerances, food allergies pose a much greater health risk.

In fact, it is estimated that 150 to 200 Americans die each year because of allergic reactions to food.

The most common symptoms of food allergies are:

- Hives, itching, or skin rash
- Swelling of the lips, face, tongue and throat, or other parts of the body
- Wheezing, nasal congestion, or trouble breathing
- Abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting
- Dizziness, lightheadedness, or fainting

In a severe allergic reaction to food, you may have more extreme versions of the above reactions. Or you may experience life-threatening symptoms such as:

- Swelling of the throat and air passages, making it difficult to breathe
- Shock, with a severe drop in blood pressure
- Rapid, irregular pulse
- Loss of consciousness

To reduce the risks of food allergies, the FDA is working to ensure that major allergenic ingredients in food are accurately labeled. Since 2006, food labels must state clearly whether the food contains a major food allergen. The following are considered to be major food allergens:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts such as almonds, walnuts, and pecans
- Soybeans
- Wheat
- Fish
- Shellfish such as crab, lobster, and shrimp

These foods account for 90 percent of all food allergies in the United States. So, remember to take all measures to protect yourself and your family members who suffer from food allergies. In addition to avoiding food items that cause a reaction, we recommend that you:

- Wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace stating that you have a food allergy
- Carry an auto-injector device containing epinephrine (adrenaline)
- Seek medical help immediately if you experience a food allergic reaction

## Beat the Heat with Red Cross Safety Tips

### Red Cross Heat Safety Tips:

- **Dress for the heat.** Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy. It is also a good idea to wear hats or to use an umbrella.
- **Drink water.** Carry water or juice with you and drink continuously even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body. Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- **Eat small meals and eat more often.** Avoid high-protein foods, which increase metabolic heat.
- **Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity.** If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4 and 7 a.m.
- **Stay indoors when possible.** If air-conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine. Remember that electric fans do not cool, they simply circulate the air.
- **Be a good neighbor.** During heat waves, check in on elderly residents in your neighborhood and those who do not have air conditioning.

### Know What These Heat-Related Terms Mean:

- **Heat cramps:** Heat cramps are muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. Although heat cramps are the least severe, they are an early signal that the body is having trouble with the heat.
- **Heat exhaustion:** Heat exhaustion typically occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a hot, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Blood flow to the skin increases, causing blood flow to decrease to the vital organs. This results in a form of mild shock. If not treated, the victim may suffer heat stroke. Signals of heat exhaustion include cool, moist, pale flushed or red skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea or vomiting; dizziness; and exhaustion. Body temperature will be near normal.
- **Heat stroke:** Also known as sunstroke, heat stroke is life-threatening. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly. Signals include hot, red and dry skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing. Body temperature can be very high—sometimes as high as 105 degrees.

### General Care for Heat Emergencies:

- **Heat cramps or heat exhaustion:** Get the person to a cooler place and have him or her rest in a comfortable position. If the person is fully awake and alert, give half a glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not let him or her drink too quickly. Do not give liquids that contain alcohol or caffeine. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths, such as towels or sheets. Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number if the person refuses water, vomits or loses consciousness.
- **Heat stroke:** Heat stroke is a life-threatening situation! Help is needed fast. Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the body. Immerse victim in a cool bath, or wrap wet sheets around the body and fan it. Watch for signals of breathing problems. Keep the person lying down and continue to cool the body any way you can. If the victim refuses water or is vomiting or there are changes in the level of consciousness, do not give anything to eat or drink.

## Advocates' Corner

### Explaining Health Care Reform: High-Risk Insurance Pool

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, signed by President Obama on March 23rd, creates a temporary national high-risk pool to provide health coverage to people with pre-existing medical conditions who have been uninsured for 6 months. Here is a summary of the high-risk pool provisions under national health reform law.

#### Eligibility

Individuals who have pre-existing conditions and have not had creditable coverage for the previous six months.

#### Benefits

The Secretary of US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will determine the minimum benefits that must be included and plans must cover at least 65% of health care costs.

#### Funding

\$5 Billion

#### Timeline

Effective 90 days after the bill is enacted (June 21, 2010). Terminates on January 1, 2014 when the American Health Benefit Exchanges are established.

### Establishing a High Risk Insurance Pool in Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Insurance Department has submitted a proposal to the HHS to establish a high-risk insurance pool in the Commonwealth. According to Insurance Commissioner Joel Ario, the pool would be designated for a limited number of uninsured residents who have health conditions that are inhibiting them from getting insurance elsewhere. "Our high-risk insurance pool will help several thousand Pennsylvanians who are simply unable to afford health insurance due to pre-existing medical conditions," Ario said.

The high-risk insurance pool would, if approved by the Department of Health and Human Services, provide the Commonwealth with access to more than \$160 million in federal funds to provide coverage and care to high-risk residents until new insurance exchanges that will be created as part of the national Health Care Reform Act take effect in 2014.

The US Department of Health and Human Services has stated that it will notify states whether or not their proposals are approved by July 1, 2010. Stay tuned for updates on how the establishment of a high-risk insurance pool will benefit our program participants as lawmakers continue to develop the program in the Keystone State.

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Community Action Committee  
of the Lehigh Valley

## **Bits and Pieces**

### **Power Outages: Key Tips for Consumers About Food Safety**

#### **Be Prepared:**

- Have a refrigerator thermometer.
- Know where you can get dry ice.
- Keep on hand a few days worth of ready-to-eat foods that do not require cooking or cooling, which depend on electricity.

#### **When the Power Goes Out:**

- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- The refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened.
- Refrigerators should be kept at 40° F or below for proper food storage.

#### **Once the Power is Restored:**

- Check the temperature inside your refrigerator and freezer.
- If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, check the temperature when the power comes back on. If the freezer thermometer reads 40° F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen.
- If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine its safety. You can't rely on appearance or odor. If the food still contains ice crystals or is 40° F or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook.
- Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for no more than 4 hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible.
- Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40° F for two hours or more.

Special thanks to our friends at the FDA for the contents of this entry. <http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm077023.htm>