



## NEWS RELEASE

By Anna Martin

Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences Advisor

UCCE San Joaquin County

June 2002

### **Don't Hold the Mayo**

It's picnic season and millions of families are packing their coolers and heading outdoors. Whether you're ordering out or bringing the food from home, there are several important facts to remember about food safety. And, despite what your mother may have told you, mayonnaise does not increase the chances of food poisoning. In fact, commercially prepared mayonnaise actually contains ingredients that protect against bacteria. It's homemade mayonnaise recipes using unpasteurized eggs that gave birth to the myth that mayonnaise causes food poisoning.

The Association for Dressings and Sauces (ADS) has collected 50 years of research that supports this claim. The trade group of mayonnaise and salad dressing manufacturers and suppliers blames the bad rap on old recipes for homemade mayonnaise, which call for raw eggs in the ingredients.

"Our studies have shown that when harmful bacteria are added to commercially prepared mayonnaise they die off quickly," reports Dr. Michael Doyle, Ph.D., Professor and Director of the University of Georgia, Center for Food Safety and Quality Enhancement. Doyle, lead researcher for the most recently completed study, says this ability to kill bacteria is "largely because of the presence of the acid that's added to commercial mayonnaise. This includes vinegar, lemon juice and salt."

"Many years ago, people were making their mayonnaise from scratch using raw, unpasteurized eggs," said Pam Chumley, food technologist and executive director for ADS. According to Chumley, today's commercially made mayonnaise and mayonnaise-type salad dressings are carefully formulated and subjected to rigorous quality control measures. "Commercial mayonnaise products are made with pasteurized eggs in a high-acid environment that slows, even inhibits, bacterial growth. It's the low-acid ingredients (chicken, ham, potatoes) that are often mixed with mayonnaise which are most susceptible to the growth of food poisoning bacteria and must be handled properly for a safe and happy picnic" she reports.

Keeping food safe starts in the kitchen and moves to the picnic table, according to experts in food safety. The Association offers these widely accepted reminders:

- Practice Cleanliness. Wash hands, utensils, and other food contact surfaces using soap and water after contact with raw meat or poultry and before contact with the same food when cooked.
- Make sure all sandwich and salad ingredients are fresh and properly washed, keeping foods separate to avoid cross-contamination.
- Cook foods to proper temperatures and store promptly, keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold. When traveling with food, keep all perishables in a cooler with ice or freeze-pack inserts until serving time. Make sure that food is cold or frozen to the touch before placing it in the cooler or cold thermos. Use a thermos designed for hot foods to keep soup, chili and stews at a safe high temperature for several hours. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours when the temperature in the food serving area is below 90° F, within 1 hour when the temperature is above 90° F.

Referenced from: Martha Lopez, UCCE Ventura County; Source: <http://www.dressings-sauces.org>