



## Food Safety: Ready-to-Eat Foods<sup>1</sup>

Jennifer Hillan and Amarat Simonne<sup>2</sup>

Ready-to-eat fresh foods can help you save time preparing meals. But some of these foods present a high risk for foodborne illness. Here are some tips for keeping ready-to-eat foods safe.

## At the grocery store, choose readyto-eat fresh foods that are:

- Packaged well
- Clean
- Stored at the right temperature either refrigerated or heated

## At home, ready-to-eat fresh food should be:

- Kept at the right temperature either refrigerated or heated
- Eaten as soon as possible
- Dated when you open it
- Thrown out three days after you open it

## **High-Risk Foods**

These ready-to-eat foods have a high risk of causing foodborne illness:

- Soft cheeses such as brie, feta, ricotta, blue-veined, and Mexican-style soft cheeses such as queso fresco (unless it is made with pasteurized milk)
- Raw, unpasteurized milk
- Soft-serve ice cream
- Hot dogs, luncheon meats, cold cuts unless they have been reheated to steaming temperatures
- Pâtés/meat spreads unless canned
- Precooked chicken
- Refrigerated smoked seafood products unless reheated to steaming temperatures
- Deli-type salads (such as coleslaw)
- Pre-packed raw vegetables and mixed raw vegetable salad
- Pre-cut fresh fruits and fruit salads



- 1. La versión en español de este documento es *Seguridad Alimentaria*: *Alimentos Listos para Comer* (FCS8910-Span). This document is FCS8910, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published: May 2010. Reviewed March 2013. Visit the EDIS website at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.
- 2. Jennifer Hillan, MSH, RD, LD/N, former ENAFS nutrition educator; Amarat Simonne, PhD, associate professor; Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences; Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences; University of Florida; Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A&M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Nick T. Place, Dean