



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/k-state-expert-shares-tips-for-halloween-food-safety>

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No nightmares: K-State expert shares tips for Halloween food safety

Scare away bacteria with these ideas on keeping goodies safe

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Temperatures are dropping and leaves are falling which means Halloween is quickly approaching. While the holiday is not always thought to be overly risky in terms of food safety, any time perishable foods are left out can be a nightmare.

“Perishable foods such as meat and cheese trays, pasta dishes or finger sandwiches should be kept in a refrigerator until the party starts,” said Karen Blakeslee, Kansas State University food scientist and coordinator of K-State’s [Rapid Response Center](#).

Blakeslee shared tips on how to keep party food safe to eat:

- Arrange food on small platters so you can refrigerate and rotate food within two hours.
- Use party tray lids as coolers by filling them with ice and setting the trays on top.
- Store perishable treats. They should not be left out at room temperature for longer than two hours.
- Wait until dough and batters are fully cooked before taste testing.
- Beware of unpasteurized juice or cider, as it can contain harmful bacteria such as *E. coli* O157:H7 or *Salmonella*.

“Wash your hands before preparing food and keep raw meats away from ready to eat foods to prevent cross contamination,” Blakeslee said.

When planning a Halloween bash, keep in mind food allergies. To avoid allergic reactions, Blakeslee suggests asking guests beforehand if they have any food allergies. Keep in mind that sesame is now the ninth major food that can trigger allergic reactions, she said.

Trick-or-treating can be a sticky situation if candy is not thoroughly inspected. “Parents should examine the treats to avoid any tricks that may be in their bags. If any treats are damaged or open, discard them,” Blakeslee said.

When gathering treats to hand out, consider non-food items for kids with food allergies. For parents, Blakeslee had another piece of advice to make Halloween a treat – and not a trick.

“Give your goblins a meal or snack before trick-or-treating to fuel them through the fun,” she said.

Blakeslee publishes a monthly newsletter called [You Asked It!](#) that provides numerous tips on being safe and healthy. More information is also available from [local extension offices](#) in Kansas.

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story:

You Asked It! (newsletter), <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter/>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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