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War and Terrorism on the Homefront

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What Can You Do?

by Cheryl Asmus, Coordinator, Family and Youth Institute

With any type of disaster, be it individual (e.g., divorce, cancer) or catastrophic (e.g., floods, terrorism attacks) our sense of vulnerability increases. The events of September 11, 2001, the continuing anthrax attacks, and the war have left many people living in the United States with feelings of fear that we, as a nation, may never have felt before. The intent of this issue is to join in the efforts to combat terrorism through information and education about what we, as individuals, can do in our own lives.

In the first article, Mary McPhail Gray, co-director of the Family and Youth Institute, describes some of the policies and regulations surrounding food and water safety in Colorado.

Katy Kohnen of CSU Cooperative Extension 4-H describes an initiative that aims to knit our communities together.

Many experts believe that the best way to deal with acts of terrorism or a disaster is to be prepared before the event. CSU Cooperative Extension's Melissa Bardsley summarizes guidelines from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Gary Ranch of the Larimer Center for Mental Health points out that, in addition to the physical damage, one of the real impacts of terrorist attacks is on the psyche of the attacked

How Can We Know If Our Food and Water Is Safe?

*by Mary McPhail Gray,
Associate Director, Colorado
State University Cooperative
Extension*

As parents talk with their children and continue their own exploration of the impact of the war and terrorism on our society, the question of food safety may emerge. Throughout our state, some Colorado State University Cooperative Extension (CSUCE) faculty and local public officials have received inquiries regarding the safety of water and food. These are legitimate questions. We need to remember that Americans enjoy one of the safest food supplies in the world.

Many agencies work together nationally and locally to ensure that we continue to have safe food and water. The "For Additional Information" chart on page two identifies how to contact them for the most up-to-date information regarding protection of our food and water supply.

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Invitation to dialogue

What issues and concerns would you like to see addressed?

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Coming next:
Creating Positive
Communities

Food and Water Safety *continued from page 1*

Water Safety

Water quality is regulated by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Strict state and federal regulations govern sampling and testing processes. Locally, Departments of Health are responsible for public water system testing. At CSU, faculty in 20 departments are engaged in research on the quality, access, and legal issues surrounding Colorado water. The Colorado Water Resources Research Institute (CWRRI) at CSU encourages ongoing research on water issues including work at Colorado School of Mines, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and CSU.

Food Safety

Representatives from the Colorado Departments of Agriculture and Public Health and Environment have been meeting with CSU faculty and administrators to discuss the protection of our food supply. The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture has been in close communication with the Rocky Mountain Plant Food and Agricultural Chemicals Organization and the Colorado Agricultural Aviation Association to reinforce regulations regarding access to pesticides used in agriculture production. In the last weeks of November, final restrictions were lifted to allow agricultural air traffic to return to normal. The Federal Bureau of Investigations visited all Colorado agricultural air sites to ensure that they were safe and that airport personnel had completed training on how to identify and report suspicious individuals or situations. Training was also completed in new emergency procedures. Questions about this collaboration and training can be directed to Jim Miller at the Department of Agriculture or Dell Rae Moellenberg at CSU.

Food Science and Human Nutrition faculty at CSU have extensive information on the appropriate preparation and storage of food and water. The state's systems of regulation and surveillance of our food supply are being enhanced, and professionals from those systems are actively building effective communication systems. In addition, information for families and decisions about the safety and storage of food in their households is available through CSU and Cooperative Extension.

Creating Youth Development Strategies for the Future

by Katy Kohnen, 4-H Program Coordinator, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension

In 2002 the 4-H movement celebrates its centennial as America's premier youth development organization. Reflecting its historic vision, 4-H hopes to commemorate this event through conversations that will bring together our nation's youth, youth leaders, and communities to create youth development strategies for the future.

From February 28 through March 3, 2002, a national conversation will be convened in Washington, DC, to focus on the following outcomes.

- a strength-based planning tool reflecting the diversity of today's youth
- a national curriculum for youth development professionals
- a compact for civic engagement among our nation's youth
- a nationwide "Power of Youth Pledge" to invest in revitalizing communities.

This conversation will be coupled with conversations across our nation to build a plan of action for youth, families, and communities.

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Emergency Preparedness: Food and Water Storage for Families

by Melissa Bardsley, MS, RD, CDE, Extension Specialist, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, Department of Food Science & Human Nutrition

Since the tragic events on September 11th, most parents have tried to maximize their families' safety in the event of future attacks. Being prepared for a terrorist attack may be difficult, but being prepared for a disruption in our food or water supply is something we can do to help us attain a sense of control. An act of terrorism affecting or disrupting our food and/or water supply is similar to a disruption resulting from a blizzard, ice storm, tornado, flood or loss of employment. To be prepared for such events, we can look to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidelines:

Emergency Food Supply Checklist

- ❏ Keep at least a three-day supply of food and water per person
- ❏ Stock foods that require no refrigeration
- ❏ Store foods your family normally eats, plus favorite treats. A crisis is not the time to learn to eat new foods
- ❏ Avoid too many foods high in salt, as this will increase thirst
- ❏ Store single servings or one-meal size portions to avoid leftovers, as refrigeration may not be available
- ❏ Follow suggestions regarding canned foods, which keep almost indefinitely as long as cans are undamaged. The can will also work as the cooking and serving dish. Open the can and remove the label before heating. Do not place metal cans in the microwave.

Foods Recommended for Storage

- ❏ Water (one gallon per person per day for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene)
- ❏ Ready-to-eat canned foods (vegetables, fruit, beans, meat, fish, poultry, meat mixtures, and pasta)
- ❏ Soups (canned or "dried soups in a cup")
- ❏ Smoked or dried meats (such as beef jerky)
- ❏ Dried fruits and vegetables
- ❏ Juices (vegetable and fruit)
- ❏ Milk (powdered, canned, evaporated)
- ❏ Staples (sugar, salt, pepper, instant potatoes and rice, coffee, tea, cocoa mix)
- ❏ Ready-to-eat foods (cereals, instant hot cereals, crackers, hard taco shells)
- ❏ High-energy foods (peanut butter, jelly, nuts, trail mix, granola bars)
- ❏ Snacks (cookies, hard candy, chocolate bars, soft drinks)

Store one or two manual can openers with your emergency food supply. Canned foods can be heated indoors with canned heat (such as Sterno). Charcoal grills, hibachis, and camp stoves must be used outside.

Food Storage Containers

Food should only be stored in food-grade containers, those that will not transfer non-food chemicals into the food and those that contain no chemicals that would be hazardous to human health. If you are not sure if a container meets these criteria, don't use it. The safety of storage containers can be determined by contacting the manufacturer and asking if a particular container is approved for food use.

Food Safety: Perishables

The main concern with perishables is how to keep them fresh when electrical power is unavailable. When the power goes off and you have no idea when it will be back, it's time to think about food safety.

The key to determining the safety of foods in the refrigerator and freezer is their temperature. If you experience a power failure, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed. Open the refrigerator as little as possible. Refrigerated items should be safe as long as the power is off no more than about 4 – 6 hours. A full freezer should keep foods safe for about two days, a half-full freezer for about one-day. If foods still contain ice crystals and/or if the freezer is 40°F or less and has been at that temperature no longer than one to two days, food that was safe when it was originally frozen should still be safe. These foods can be refrozen or cooked and eaten. Discard any perishable food that has been stored at temperatures above 40°F for two or more hours, or any food that has an unusual odor, color or texture.

Source: *Front Range Healthy Lifestyles Issues Team, CSU Cooperative Extension*

For additional information provided by CSU Cooperative Extension: *Emergency Preparedness Information* <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/emergency/emermenu.html>, *Food Safety Fact Sheets* <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/pubfood.html>

The Professional's Role in Combating Psychological Terrorism

An article based on the work of George Everly, Jr., Ph.D. and Jeffrey Mitchell, Ph.D.

by Gary Ranch, Psy.D., Disaster Response Coordinator, The Larimer Center for Mental Health, Fort Collins, Colorado

As professionals serving families still reeling from the attacks of September 11th, we must keep in mind that, in all likelihood, the loss of life and structural damage were not the terrorists' primary aim. Terrorism is typically a strategic weapon with the ultimate goal of shattering the target population's national psyche. Suggestions from psychotraumatology experts Everly and Mitchell (2001) can help us frame our approach to treating people suffering from anxiety, fear, and despair.

Never lose sight of the fact that the terrorist act is engineered to engender psychological instability. The goal is to induce a state of psychological uncertainty, personal vulnerability, and fear. Death and destruction are merely a means to an end.

Support and restoration of a sense of community are imperative. Mental health disaster responders should collaborate with mass media services to provide ongoing information. Credible information often serves to reduce anxiety and diminish chaos. Accurate information also combats destructive rumors.

It is essential that the re-establishment of normal communication, transportation, school, and work schedules be enacted quickly. The longer and greater the

disruption of normal routines, the greater is the perceived risk and lack of safety on the part of the community.

Understanding and utilizing the power of symbols are means of reinstating community cohesion. Flags, bumper stickers, signs, and billboards can all be effective. Formal rituals to honor the survivors, the rescuers, and the dead are powerful interventions. Opportunities should be provided for others, not directly affected, to assist victims (e.g., donate blood, money, clothing, etc.). The population attacked needs to hear the message that an effective way to honor the dead is to carry on and succeed in life! To do otherwise is to allow the terrorists to be victorious with their goal.

Terrorism is psychological warfare. This is a war that is won not on a battlefield, but in the mind. Mental health providers play a vital role in providing public support and restoration of a sense of community. Time and resources need to be allocated to develop a sophisticated emergency mental health services system. Such a system is a powerful weapon in winning the war against terrorism.

Reference: Everly, G.S. Jr., & Mitchell, J.T. America Under Attack: The "Ten Commandments" of Responding to Mass Terrorist Attacks.

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