Make Homemade Ice Cream a Safe Summer Treat

By Janet Hackert, Regional Nutrition and Health Education Specialist

The heat of summer is on and thoughts turn to cool treats. Ice cream is an old standby, but when making homemade ice cream, care is needed to keep it safe to eat. There are also non-dairy options that are safe.

According to the International Dairy Foods Association, ice cream has been popular for a long time. Though it likely originated elsewhere, it has been in the U.S. since the 1700’s. President George Washington even enjoyed it. With technological developments in cooling foods, homogenizing milk and transporting products, the ice cream industry has grown to a production rate of more than 1.6 billion gallons annually.

There are several ways to make ice cream at home safely that address concerns associated with potential salmonella in raw eggs. Pasteurized eggs or pasteurized egg substitutes can be used in place of raw eggs in recipes. When using this method, the USDA and FDA recommend using a recipe that starts with a cooked base, especially if those at higher risk for food-borne illness may be consuming the final product. (These would include the very young, the very old and those with compromised immune systems.) Another safe option is to use a recipe for a cooked custard ice cream.

An easy way to make homemade ice cream safely is to simply use no eggs at all. For example, combine 2 cups milk, 1 cup sugar, 2 cups whipping cream or half-and-half, and 2 teaspoons vanilla and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Pour this mix into a 1-gallon ice cream freezer can and freeze according to manufacturer’s directions. This recipe and a similar one for ‘ice cream in a bag’ that does not even require using an ice cream freezer, and others, can be found at http://missourifamilies.org.

For safely made homemade ice cream, use pasteurized milk and cream also.

Lower fat milk can be used for a healthier choice, but the lower the fat content, the less creamy the end product. Keep it a healthy choice by practicing moderation. Or try other cold treats such as sherbet, fruit juice popsicles or frozen fruit bites.

For more information on safe homemade ice cream, or any other topic, please contact me, Janet Hackert, at 660-425-6434 or HackertJ@missouri.edu or your local University of Missouri Extension office.

(Written 6/12/15)