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CONTACT: Lindsay Hodges
850-245-4111

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION MONTH
Department of Health Emphasizes "Store It. Don't Ignore It."

TALLAHASSEE—The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is celebrating National Food Safety Education Month, an annual observance to focus attention on the importance of safe food handling and preparation in home and commercial kitchens. This year's theme is "Store It. Don't Ignore It."

"By following food storage tips, you can keep your food safe and free from contamination," said DOH Deputy State Health Officer Bonnie Sorensen, M.D., M.B.A. "Food safety is the key to preventing foodborne illnesses."

DOH offers four simple food storage tips:

- **Store It. Don't Ignore It** -- Keep hot foods at 140 degrees Fahrenheit and cold foods at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or less.
- **Don't Cross-Contaminate When You Refrigerate** -- Fight "cross-contamination," the transfer of harmful bacteria to food from other foods, cutting boards or utensils if they are not handled properly. Never place any type of food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry or seafood. Also, store cooked foods above raw foods.
- **When You Put Foods Away, Make Sure They Stay Properly Covered** -- Don't store foods uncovered.
- **Keep Foods Up-Up and Away** -- Store dry foods at least 6 inches off of the floor and away from walls.

For more information about safe food handling and storage, visit the DOH website at www.doh.state.fl.us and select food hygiene from the pull down menu.

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