



**P**asta is a very popular food around the world. Traditionally, pasta is considered an Italian food, but it was most likely brought to Italy from Asia. Pasta is made with durum wheat flour, and combined with eggs and water to form dense dough. Once the dough is formed into any variety of shapes, it can either be cooked fresh or dried.

Dried pasta is inexpensive and has a very long shelf life, which makes it a great food to keep stocked in the pantry. Pasta can be topped with a variety of sauces, meats, and vegetables. Pick and choose to create your favorite combination!

PASTA	SAUCE	ADDITIONS
Fettuccine	Low-fat alfredo	Chicken and broccoli
Penne	Marinara	Lean ground meat and spinach
Spaghetti	Parmesan cheese and olive oil	Shrimp and cherry tomatoes
Rotini	Light mayonnaise	Tomato, cucumber, peppers, and a hard-cooked egg

## *Mamma Mia—Serving up Rotini!*

**Whole wheat rotini pasta** counts as a whole grain ounce-equivalent from MyPlate. Rotini pasta is shaped to hold on to hearty sauces such as tomato and meat sauces.

### Selection:

- Choose packages that are free from any tears, dents, or bulges, which could mean the product is unsafe to eat.
- Check the “Best by” or “Best if used by” date on the package.

### Storage:

- Store unopened packages in a cool, clean, dry place.
- Once the package is opened, store uncooked pasta in an airtight container or place the original package in a resealable plastic bag.
- After cooking, keep pasta in a tightly covered glass or plastic container for up to four days in the refrigerator or up to two months in the freezer.

### Nutrition: 1/2 cup of cooked **whole wheat rotini**:

- Provides 90 calories and 2 grams of fiber.
- Contains 4 grams of protein and is naturally fat- and sodium-free.
- Counts as one ounce equivalent from the MyPlate grain group.

### Uses:

- Include **whole wheat rotini** in recipes for soups.
- Serve **whole wheat rotini** with tomato sauce, chopped lean meat, grated Parmesan cheese, and a side of fruit for a complete MyPlate meal.
- Combine **whole wheat rotini** with chopped vegetables, low-fat cheese, and low-fat dressing for a refreshing pasta salad.



# Summer Food Safety

Summer is perfect for spending time with family and friends outdoors enjoying delicious food. However, warmer weather can increase the risk of foodborne illness. When food sits in hot outdoor temperatures, bacteria can grow quickly. Protect yourself and your loved ones by following these summer food safety tips.

- ◇ **Keep cold foods cold.** To keep foods below 40°F, place in a cooler with ice or ice packs and keep the lid tightly closed.
- ◇ **Grill meats to the proper temperature.** Use a meat thermometer to make sure steaks are cooked to at least 145°F, hamburgers to 160°F, and chicken to 165°F. Keep hot foods hot by moving them to the side of the grill rack, away from the flames or coals.
- ◇ **Avoid cross-contamination.** Use separate plates and utensils for raw and cooked meats. Do not place marinade used on raw meat onto cooked meat.
- ◇ **Don't forget about handwashing.** If at a camp or picnic site, bring a jug of water and soap, or cleansing towelettes.
- ◇ **Pack food away when finished eating.** Do not keep food outside for more than two hours, and lessen time to one hour when the temperature is above 90°F.



Adapted from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' "Keep Your Picnic Safe" and the FDA's "Eating Outdoors, Handling Food Safely."

## Simple Pasta Salad

**Serves: 4**  
**Serving Size: 1 cup**



### Ingredients:

- 3 cups **whole grain rotini pasta**, cooked
- 1 small cucumber, chopped
- 1 small tomato, chopped
- 1/2 green pepper, chopped
- 1/2 red onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup reduced fat Italian dressing

### Instructions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Mix well.
2. Cover and refrigerate.
3. Toss before serving.

Pair with grilled lean meat and yogurt topped with berries for a MyPlate friendly meal.

**Nutritional analysis (1 cup):** 220 calories, 2.5g fat, 0g saturated, 0g trans, 150mg sodium, 45g carbohydrates, 6g fiber, 7g sugar, 9g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart Eat Smart website,  
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/pasta-salad>.

## Helpful Resources

Polk County Congregate Meals  
(515) 286-3679

Commodity and Supplemental Foods  
(515) 286-3655

Nutrition, Food Preparation and Food Safety  
ISU AnswerLine  
1-800-262-3804

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