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AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE - UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



(612) 373-0710

consumer radio briefs

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Aluminum Cooking Utensils

Don't fall for salesmen who claim aluminum cooking utensils are unsafe.

There is no objective scientific evidence that shows aluminum utensils harmful to foods. That's the report from University of Minnesota extension nutritionist Isabel Wolf.

Other experts agree. Nutritionist Jean Mayer says aluminum pots have been the target of unsubstantiated critical claims for years. These claims come most often from salesmen who would have you discard your perfectly good cookware for whatever it is they're selling.

Aluminum is the third most common element in the earth's crust and therefore occurs naturally in many foods. It also is used directly in a number of food products. Pickles, for example, are kept crunchy by adding alum, which contains aluminum. The amount of aluminum ingested from aluminum hardware is far less than from other sources and truly insignificant.

Some salesmen claim that aluminum is more porous than other metal surfaces and therefore "harbors great numbers of dangerous bacteria." University extension microbiologist Edmund Zottola says aluminum is no more porous than other metals.

Other salesmen point to the non-use of aluminum as dairy processing equipment as evidence that the metal is unsafe. But University food scientist Ted Labuza says aluminum is not used for processing equipment since it's less durable, not because it's unsafe.

The American Cancer Society says the use of aluminum cooking utensils does not contaminate food, nor does it in any way contribute to the development of cancer or any other disease.

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