



Barbecue Food Safety Tips

Many people enjoy outdoor grilling in the summer months. Here are some tips to avoid food related illness caused by germs growing quickly in the summer heat.

Wash your hands and forearms thoroughly before preparing or serving food. Use warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.

WHILE YOU ARE COOKING...

Meats must be cooked to the proper temperature to assure safety.

Germs such as E-coli and salmonella can still be present in undercooked meats such as hamburger and chicken. These germs can cause severe illness and even death.

While the juice color will usually change from red to gray when the meat is fully cooked, it is not a reliable test to assure it is safe to eat. Always check the temperature with a meat thermometer. Foods that reach the temperature listed below or higher are fully cooked.

Chicken	165° F
Hamburger	160° F
Pork	150° F
Hot dogs	140° F
Beef (rare)	130° F
Leftovers	165° F
Eggs	145° F
Other foods	140° F

Insert the thermometer into the center of the meat, which is the least cooked part. For checking hot dogs, go from the end of the hot dog to the center. Be careful not to pass through the meat and touch the cooking surface or you will get a false high temperature reading.

Wash your hands after touching raw meat or cracking eggs! Use utensils to handle the cooked meat and eggs. Do not place cooked meat or cooked eggs on surfaces that had raw meat or raw egg liquid.

WHILE YOU ARE SERVING FOOD...

Serve the first-cooked meats first. Make sure the food is used before the temperature drops under 140 degrees, and within two hours.

Cold foods need to be kept cold. Keep them refrigerated (at 45° F) or stored in coolers with lots of ice until ready to eat.

Before serving, wash your hands thoroughly. Avoid touching food such as rolls, bread etc. with your bare hands. Wash your hands after touching raw or undercooked foods.

Use a utensil when serving food.

Refrigerate any leftovers immediately! Never leave food at room temperature for more than two hours.

WHEN WORKING WITH FOOD...

Leave the food preparation area to smoke, eat, or drink.

When you return, wash your hands thoroughly before handling any food.

Wash your hands after any contact with unclean surfaces -- after handling trash or raw meat, eating or smoking, using the bathroom, handling pets, or dirtying your hands during any activity.

A FEW MORE TIPS...

- **Wipe** surfaces often, especially after using them for food preparation. Germs from undercooked meat can grow on vegetables cut or washed on the same surface as meat. Mix and use a sanitizer solution of one capful of chlorine bleach per gallon of water for cleaning work surfaces.
- **Marinate** food in the refrigerator. Don't taste the marinade or re-use it after raw meat has been added.
- **Keep** flies away! Cover trash containers, and do not store meat wrappers and other trash, even for a short time, in open cardboard boxes or uncovered containers.
- **Do not** use fly spray or "No-Pest" chemical strips - they can contaminate the food.
- **Do not** store food containers out in the open; rather, place them in the shade or return them to a cooler when not in use.
- **Keep** plates, cups, utensils and food covered until ready to use.
- **Never** re-use plates before washing them, especially plates used to hold raw meats or eggs.
- **Use** a separate cutting board or surface for foods that will not be cooked (such as salad).
- **When** handling plates, cups and utensils, touch them where food will not be placed: use handles, rims, bottom of plates, etc.
- **Tie** long hair back in a ponytail or bun. A hat, bandanna or net will also work.
- **Don't** prepare and serve food if you have been sick with vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours.
- **Don't** wear loose finger or wrist jewelry or false nails while working with food.
- **Pack** plenty of paper towels for cleaning hands and surfaces at your picnic.

For more information call:
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