



4th of July and Summer Picnic and Grilling Food Safety Tips

Every year, millions of people experience foodborne illness. Generally, these illnesses are preventable. Below are tips to make sure that you and your family aren't victims of a preventable foodborne illness.



Keep it Clean!

Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling food. Bring water for preparation and cleaning if there is no safe drinking water source. Use wet disposable cloths or moist towelette's and paper towels for cleaning hands and surfaces. *Avoid cross-contamination during preparation, grilling and serving food.*



Keep Hot Food Hot!

If a food is cooked and put out to serve, make sure that you keep the food hot if it is not going to be eaten right away. If you are going to cool the food in the refrigerator, be sure to cool it quickly in a shallow container.



Keep Cold Food Cold!

Cold salads, lunchmeats, dairy products and other foods, which require refrigeration, should always be kept cold (below 40°F). Food can quickly warm up, so keep it cold! Be sure to store coolers in the shade whenever possible. Food should never be left out of the cooler or off the grill for more than 1 hour when the outside temperature is above 90°F.



Cook Meat Thoroughly!

E. coli is a bacteria that may be present in raw ground meat. It is important that hamburgers and other ground meat products be cooked thoroughly to kill this bacteria. Ground beef must reach an internal temperature of 160°F in order to ensure that the E. coli has been killed. The interior of the meat may appear cooked, but you cannot assure its safety until the temperature reaches 160°F. Cooking time depends on many factors: so it's important to use food thermometers to monitor temperatures of the meat or poultry.

Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature:

- Beef, veal and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops may be cooked to 145 °F.
- All cuts of pork to 160 °F.
- Ground beef, veal, and lamb to 160 °F.
- All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F.



When In Doubt, Throw It Out!

If you are uncertain as to whether or not a food is still safe to eat, do not eat it. Even reheating foods cannot destroy the toxins of some bacteria if a food has been handled incorrectly. The consequences of foodborne illness are not worth the money you will save trying to salvage the food. It's better to be safe than sorry!