

## Helpful Hints for Barbecue Food Safety

April 15, 2022

### Food Safety Principles

➤ **Potentially Hazardous Food**

Potentially hazardous food are things like dairy products, meats, potato and macaroni salads, and even cooked vegetables. All food has to have to be potentially hazardous are the right moisture content and right pH level.

➤ **Time-Temperature Control**

When potentially hazardous foods are left out long enough in the **Danger Zone** temperature range that can support bacterial growth (above 41<sup>0</sup>F and below 135<sup>0</sup>F) the food can make people sick.

➤ **Cumulative Impact**

All the times that a potentially hazardous food item is left in the **Danger Zone**, from purchase to storage to preparation to serving) are cumulative because each time the food is out of temperature bacteria are allowed to multiple some more.

➤ **Cross Contamination**

When ready-to-eat foods, such as green salads or fruit, come in contact with dirty hands or contaminated work surfaces, cross contamination takes place. The same cutting board that is used to cut up and season raw chicken before placing on the BBQ should not be used to cut up salad, fruit, or any other food that will not be cooked before being eaten.

➤ **Personal Hygiene**

One of the most effective ways to prevent foodborne illness is to practice frequent hand washing and personal hygiene.



**Food safety challenges at outdoor picnics:** All the elements described above that a necessary for preventing foodborne illness are more difficult to maintain at outdoor BBQs where are often no refrigerators to keep food cold, facilities to wash and sanitize cutting boards, or conveniently located sinks for frequent hand washing.



### From the Store to Home

- Buy cold food like meat and poultry last, right before checkout.
- Separate raw meat and poultry from other food in your shopping cart
- Guard against raw meat or poultry juices dripping on other food -- put packages of raw meat and poultry into plastic bags
- Drive directly home from the grocery store
- Take along an ice cooler when traveling longer than 30 from the store to home
- Always refrigerate perishable and potentially food right away
- Freeze poultry and ground meat that won't be used in 1 or 2 days; freeze other meat within 4 to 5 days

### Defrost Safely

- Completely defrost meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks more evenly
- Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing or thaw sealed packages in cold water
- Microwave defrost if the food will be placed immediately on the grill

### Marinating

- Meat and poultry can be marinated for several hours or days to tenderize or add flavor
- Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter
- If used as sauce, reserve a portion of the marinade before putting raw meat and poultry in it.
- If reused for later for more raw meat, make sure to let it come to a boil first to destroy any harmful bacteria
- Cooking Hint: Vacuum lock bags and injection

### Transporting

- Keep food cold to minimize bacterial growth
- Use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40°F or below (use your probe thermometer)

- Pack food right from the refrigerator into the cooler immediately before leaving home
- Keep the cooler in the coolest part of the car

#### Keep Cold Food Cold

- Keep meat and poultry refrigerated until ready to use
- Only take out the meat and poultry that will immediately be placed on the grill
- Keep cooler out of the direct sun by placing it in the shade or shelter
- Avoid opening the lid too often, which lets cold air out and warm air in
- Pack beverages in one cooler and perishables in a separate cooler

#### Keep Everything Clean

- Be sure there are plenty of clean disposable utensils and platters
- Don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry
- Wash hands frequently
- Use water from a safe source for preparation and cleaning
- Describe portable handwashing station

#### Precooking

- Avoid precooking potentially hazardous food ahead of time to reduce grilling time unless the food can go immediately on the preheated grill to complete cooking.



#### Cook Thoroughly

- Use a probe thermometer that measures temperature from the tip
  - Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside so check for a safe minimum internal temperature before serving
  - Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts and chops can be cooked to 145 °F
- Hamburgers made of ground beef should reach 160 °F.

- All cuts of pork should reach 160 °F
- All poultry should reach a minimum of 165 °F
- Our consumer protection staff recommends to the public 165 °F for all meat
- Do not partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later



### Keep Hot Food Hot

- After cooking meat and poultry on the grill, keep it hot until served - at 140°F or warmer.
- Keep cooked meats hot by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals where they could overcook
- At home, the cooked meat can be kept hot in a warm oven (approximately 200°F), in a chafing dish or slow cooker, or on a warming tray

### Reheating

- When reheating fully cooked meats like hot dogs, grill to 165°F or until steaming hot

### Serving the Food

- When taking food off the grill, use a clean platter
- Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry
- Keep food covered to minimize access by flies and bees
- In hot weather (above 90°F), food should never sit out for more than 1 hour, otherwise it should be out for no more than 2 hours.

### Leftovers

- Avoid bringing home leftovers if possible
- Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in shallow containers
- Discard any potentially hazardous food left out more than 2 hours (1 hour if temperatures are above 90°F)