

Serving Up Food Safety



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Summer and Grilling Outdoors

It's that time of year again when the warmer weather makes it ideal for grilling and barbecuing outdoors! But remember to follow food safety in the summer months when foodborne illnesses tend to spike.

- Thaw food safely, in the refrigerator is the safest way.
- Wash hands and food contact surfaces before and after cooking.
- Wash fruits and vegetables under running water and keep refrigerated before grilling, if cut or peeled.
- Marinate food in the refrigerator. If the marinade is used as a sauce, keep a portion aside before adding raw meat or boil before using on cooked meat.
- Keep raw food separate from cooked food. Use separate plates and utensils.
- Keep hot food hot (140° F or above) and cold food cold (40° F or below).
- Keep food at 40° F or below until ready to cook or eat.
- Temperatures: 145° F for beef, pork, lamb, veal, and fish. 160° F for hamburgers, other ground meats, and sausage. 165° F for all poultry (ground, parts, or whole) and hot dogs. Always use a calibrated thermometer to check doneness!
- When smoking food, keep smoker temperature anywhere from 225° F-300° F
- Check your grill and tools. Wire bristles from grill-cleaning brushes could stick into food on the grill.
- Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within 2 hours or 1 hour if above 90° F outside.



Is grilling hazardous to your health? Foods cooked over a grill can become charred due to the flames and high heat. The charring happens when fat from the meat, fish, or poultry drips down on the hot coals, causing flames that char the food. Some research suggests that eating large amounts of charred foods can increase one's risk of developing some forms of cancer. Eating moderate amounts of foods cooked to a safe internal temperature without charring does not appear to increase the risk.

To prevent grilled foods from being charred:

- Remove as much of the visible fat as possible before the food is placed on the grill.
- Clean the grill completely before cooking to remove any charred foods left over from past uses.
- If using starter fluid on charcoal, let any excess fluid burn off before placing food on the grill. Never add extra starter fluid while food is on the grill.
- Try not to use marinades that have large amounts of fat (butter, margarine, or vegetable oil).
- Cover the grill with aluminum foil. Punch holes between the grids to let juices drip out.
- Use tongs instead of a fork when cooking. The prongs of a fork can pierce meat and poultry, causing a release of juices that cause the flames.
- If grilling fish or vegetables, wrap them in aluminum foil before placing on the grill.
- Microwave food just before grilling. This can release some of the juices which can drip on the coals and cause flames.
- Cut and throw away charred portions off of cooked foods.

Sources: CDC, foodsafety.gov, and Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service - F&N Unit

Article by: Julie Prouse

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Salmonella - A Summertime Bug You Don't Want!

Don't get bugged by a foodborne illness this summer. Did you know that foodborne food illnesses increase during summer months? It's true, diseases caused by eating contaminated food rise during the warmer months due to warmer temperatures and poor food handling practices.

Let's take a closer look into Salmonella, one of the major sources of foodborne illnesses each year. Salmonella can be found in a variety of foods including meat products, vegetables, eggs, sprouts, and in processed foods. Foods that are affected tend to look and smell fine, therefore making it hard to tell if it is contaminated.

Salmonella illnesses can be serious and are more dangerous for certain individuals. Symptoms typically appear within 6 to 48 hours after ingestion and often last 4-7 days. Many people recover without the use of antibiotic medications. However, some individuals are at a higher risk of contracting the illness, such as the elderly, infants, and individuals with weakened immune systems. In these individuals, symptoms can be more severe causing a more serious health risk. It has been noted that for every one case of Salmonella that is confirmed, there are about 29 more cases that go unreported/not confirmed. As noted, most individuals can fight this illness without seeking medical treatment. Consequently, they are not submitting samples for testing, so no one learns what made that individual sick.

Remember, warmer weather helps create ideal conditions for Salmonella growth. When eating outdoors this summer, it is important to keep perishable foods cold until consumption and refrigerate all leftovers within 2 hours of being set out (1 hour if the temperature is above 90°F). Avoid eating raw or undercooked eggs and egg products. Be aware of who will be in attendance at your next summer cooking experience and always remember to handle/cook/store foods properly. If your establishment is catering this summer, remember to cook foods to proper internal temperatures prior to serving and to keep foods at the proper temperatures until consumed.

Source: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/2016/07/salmonella.html> Article by: Rebecca Dittmar

