

Grilling Outdoors Safely

With school out, Father's Day, 4th of July and many other summer activities approaching, many of you are sure to fire up the outdoor grill to help with food preparation for the celebrations.

Outdoor grilling is a popular way to prepare food during warmer weather while enjoying the company of family and friends. However, grilling does open the door to foodborne illness if proper cleanliness and preparation measures are not followed.

To make your cookout a fond memory rather than a regretful experience, follow these simple steps:

Food preparation:

- Select fresh meat, poultry or seafood that is high quality for best cooking results.
- Keep these perishable products at 40 degrees Fahrenheit (F) or colder, until immediately before grilling.
- Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator and discard leftover marinade.
- Wash your hands before and after working with raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- Wash your work surfaces and cutting boards with hot, soapy water before and after preparing food. To sanitize use 1 teaspoon bleach per quart of warm water. If possible, use a separate cutting board for fresh produce and raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- When away from home, keep your meat and poultry away from other food in a separate cooler with ice. This prevents cross contamination.
- After placing raw meat on the grill, wash utensils and platters with hot, soapy water before using them to serve cooked food.
- Cook foods to an internal temperature that destroys harmful bacteria. Check the temperature by placing a thermometer in the center-most part of the meat, not touching the bone.

Internal temperatures for thorough cooking to prevent foodborne illness are:

- Whole poultry – 165 F
- Poultry breasts – 165 F
- Ground beef patties – 160 F
- Ground poultry – 165 F
- Beef, veal, lamb steaks, roasts or chops – 145 F (yields medium rare doneness)
- All cuts of pork – 160 F (yields medium doneness)

Safe handling of cooked food:

- Serve food immediately after grilling or keep at 135 F or above until served.
- Place on a clean platter.
- Refrigerate on a clean platter.

- Refrigerate all leftovers immediately at 40 F or below.

Discard any food left out longer than two hours, or one hour if the temperature is above 90 F.

Note: These temperatures are recommended for consumer cooking. They are not intended for processing, institutional or food service preparation. Food Service Workers should consult the state or local food code, or health department.

Finally, if you are looking for a recipe to make your own rub to use on meats throughout this grilling season, you might want to try the following courtesy of the Texas Beef Council.

RANCH RUB

2 teaspoons sweet paprika, 2 teaspoons dried thyme, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon garlic powder, 1 teaspoon onion powder, 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper, 1/2 teaspoon ground red pepper, 1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper. Combine all ingredients. Store in airtight container. Shake before using.

Source: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Texas Beef Council