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Environmental Health Services
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Summertime Food Safety

Cooking outdoors and vacation time. The common denominator for all our summer travels and fun is F-O-O-D! It is important to follow food safety guidelines to prevent harmful bacterial from multiplying and causing foodborne illness. Use these simple guidelines.

From the Store-Go Home First

When shopping, buy cold food-like meat & poultry-last, right before checkout. Separate raw meat and poultry from other food in your shopping cart. This will help guard against cross-contamination- which can happen when raw meat or poultry juices drip on other food. Put packages of raw meat and poultry into plastic bags.



Plan to drive directly home from the store. Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours. Bacteria grows rapidly at temperatures between 40°F and 135°F and can reach dangerous levels within 2 hours. This is known as the "Temperature Danger Zone". ***If the outside temperature is above 90°F-refrigerate within 1 hour.*** Place meat and poultry into the refrigerator immediately when arriving home.

Defrost Safely

Completely defrost meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks more thoroughly and evenly. Thaw in the refrigerator and not on the counter at room temperature. Sealed packages can also be thawed in cold water. If meat and poultry is defrosted in the microwave, it must be cooked immediately.

Marinating

Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. If marinade is to be used as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion of it BEFORE putting in any raw meat or poultry.



Transporting

When traveling with perishable food (for example, meat, poultry, eggs, and salads), place in an insulated cooler with ice or freezer packs. Keep food at 40°F or below, to minimize bacterial growth. Be sure to keep raw meat and poultry wrapped SEPARATELY from cooked foods or foods meant to be eaten raw, such as fruits or salads.



Prepare cooked food, such as turkey, ham, chicken, and vegetable or pasta salads, ahead of time to allow for thorough chilling in the refrigerator. Divide large amounts of food into shallow containers for fast chilling and easier use. Pack food right from the refrigerator into the cooler and put in the coolest part of the car.

Some food is safe without a cold source. Food that doesn't require refrigeration include fruits, vegetables, hard cheese, canned meat and canned fish, chips, breads, crackers, peanut butter, jelly, mustard, and pickles.

Keep Cold Food Cold

Keep cooler out of the direct sun by placing in the shade. Avoid opening the lid too often-which lets cold air out and warm air in. Pack beverages in a separate cooler from perishables.

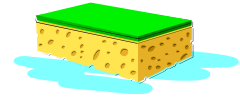


Keep Everything Clean

Unwashed hands are a prime cause of foodborne illness. Wash your hands with soap and warm water before you prepare or eat food, after using the restroom, changing diapers, or handling pets. A sanitizer may also be used, but does not replace thorough handwashing.



Have a source of clean water. If no source is available, bring water for drinking, food preparation and cleaning. Pack clean cloths / wet towelettes for cleaning surfaces and hands. A sanitizing solution of 1 teaspoon bleach in 1 quart room temperature water may be used. If it becomes necessary to obtain water from the wild, steps must be taken to make it as safe as possible. The surest way to make water safe is to boil it, as boiling kills microorganisms.



Bring water to a rolling boil, then continue boiling for 1 minute. Muddy water should sit for a while, allowing silt to settle to the bottom. Dip the clear water off the top and boil (at higher elevations, water needs to boil for several minutes. Another choice is water purification tablets and water filters, which can be purchased at camp supply stores.



To prevent foodborne illness, separate platters and utensils for raw meat and cooked meat. Harmful bacteria present in raw meat and poultry and their juices can contaminate safely cooked food. Have plenty of clean utensils and platters.

Cook Thoroughly



Cook food to a safe internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Take a food thermometer along. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside, so be sure that meats are cooked thoroughly.

Cook beef, pork and fish to an internal temperature of 145°F.

Ground beef and injected meats to an internal temperature of 155°F.

Poultry to an internal temperature 165°F.

NEVER partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later. Partial cooking of food ahead of time allows bacteria to survive and multiply to the point that subsequent cooking cannot destroy them.

Reheating

When reheating **fully cooked meats** like hot dogs, grill to 165°F or above.



Keep Hot Food Hot



After cooking meat and poultry on the grill, keep it hot until served - at 140°F or above. At home, the cooked meat can be kept hot in a warm oven (approximately 200° F, chafing dish, slow cooker, or on a warming tray).

Serving Food

Use a clean platter. Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry. Safely cooked food can become contaminated with harmful bacteria that is present in raw meat juices.

Food should never sit out for more than 1 hour in hot weather - above 90°F.

Leftovers

Put leftover perishables back on ice once you finish eating so they do not spoil or become unsafe to eat. Discard any food left out more than 2 hours (1 hour if outside temperature is above 90°F, as it may not be safe to eat).



If in doubt-throw it out!

Please feel free to call us at (406) 582-3120 with any questions!