

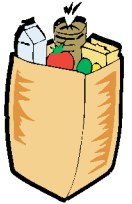
Barbecue Food Safety

Food Safety in Your Home

Cooking outdoors was once only a summer activity shared with family and friends. Now more than half of Americans say they are cooking outdoors year round. So whether the snow is blowing or the sun is shining brightly, it's important to follow food safety guidelines to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying and causing foodborne illness. Use these simple guidelines for grilling food safely.

From the Store: Home First

When shopping, buy cold food like meat and poultry last, right before checkout. Separate raw meat and poultry from other food in your shopping cart. To 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. Once home, place meat and poultry in the refrigerator immediately. Freeze poultry and ground meat that won't be used in one or two days; freeze other meat within four to five days.



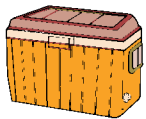
Defrost Safely

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. You can microwave defrost if the food will be placed immediately on the grill.

Marinating

Meat and poultry can be marinated for several hours to tenderize or add flavor. Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. If the marinade used on raw meat or poultry is to be reused for basting the meat while cooking, make sure to let it come to a boil first to destroy any harmful bacteria.

Keep Cold Food Cold



Keep meat and poultry refrigerated until ready to use, including the time you might take in driving to a picnic. When using a cooler, keep it 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 utensils and platters. To prevent foodborne illness, don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry. Harmful bacteria present in raw meat and poultry and their juices can contaminate safely cooked food. Be sure there is plenty of clean water for hand washing, or pack clean cloths, and wet towelettes for cleaning surfaces and hands. 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. Any harmful bacteria present in the raw meat juices could contaminate safely cooked food.

Cook Thoroughly

Cook food to a safe internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature. Whole poultry should reach 180°F; breasts, 170°F. Hamburgers made of ground beef should reach 160°F; ground poultry, 165°F. Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts and chops can be cooked to 145°F. All cuts of pork should reach 160°F. Hot dogs and sausages should be cooked to 165°F, or until steaming hot.

Never partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later.

