

Food Safety

HELPFUL HINTS FROM EXPERTS

Bring On The Barbecue But Remember Food Safety

(NAPSA)—Whatever you serve up at your next barbecue, don't add a side of bacteria. To help prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying and causing foodborne illness, follow these tips from the USDA:

From the Store: When shopping, buy cold food such as meat and poultry last, right before checkout. Separate raw meat and poultry from other food in your shopping cart. To guard against cross-contamination, put packages of raw meat and poultry into plastic bags. Drive directly home and refrigerate perishable food within two hours, one hour if the temperature is above 90° F.

Thaw Safely: Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing or thaw sealed packages in cold water. You can thaw food in the microwave just before putting it on the grill.

Marinating: A marinade is a savory, acidic sauce in which a food is soaked to enrich its flavor or to tenderize it. Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Poultry and cubed meat or stew meat can be marinated up to two days. Beef, veal, pork and lamb roasts, chops and steaks may be marinated up to five days.

If the marinade is to be used as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion before putting raw meat and poultry in it. If the marinade used on raw meat or poultry is to be reused, boil it first.

Transporting: When taking food to another location, keep it cold to minimize bacterial growth. Use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40° F or below.



Before grilling, completely thaw meat and poultry so it cooks more evenly.

Keep Cold Food Cold: Keep meat and poultry refrigerated until ready to use. When using a cooler, keep it out of the sun and avoid opening the lid too often.

Keep Everything Clean: 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. Bring water for preparation and cleaning. Or pack clean cloths and moist towelettes for cleaning surfaces and hands.

Precooking: Precooking food partially in the microwave, oven or stove is a good way to reduce grill time. Make sure that the food goes immediately on the preheated grill to complete cooking.

Cook Thoroughly: Meat and poultry that are cooked on a grill often brown very fast on the outside. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature. For more tips, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/barbecue_food_safety/index.asp.