

Food Safety in the Great Outdoors

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Picnic and barbecue season offers lots of opportunities for outdoor fun with family and friends. But these warm weather events also present opportunities for foodborne bacteria to thrive. To protect yourself, your family, and friends from foodborne illness during warm-weather months, safe food handling when eating outdoors is critical. The U.S. Food & Drug Administration offers these simple food safety guidelines for transporting your food to the picnic site, and preparing and serving it safely once you've arrived.



Pack and Transport Food Safely

Keep your food safe: from the refrigerator/freezer — all the way to the picnic table.

- **Keep cold food cold.** Place cold food in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs. Cold food should be stored at 40 °F or below to prevent bacterial growth. Meat, poultry, and seafood may be packed while still frozen so that they stay colder longer.
- **Organize cooler contents.** Consider packing beverages in one cooler and perishable foods in another. That way, as picnickers open and reopen the beverage cooler to replenish their drinks, the perishable foods won't be exposed to warm outdoor air temperatures.
- **Keep coolers closed.** Once at the picnic site, limit the number of times the cooler is opened as much as you can. This helps to keep the contents cold longer.
- **Don't cross-contaminate.** Be sure to keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood securely wrapped. This keeps their juices from contaminating prepared/cooked foods or foods that will be eaten raw, such as fruits and vegetables.
- **Clean your produce.** Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water before packing them in the cooler — including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Rub firm-skinned fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water. Dry fruits and vegetables with a

clean cloth towel or paper towel. Packaged fruits and vegetables that are labeled “ready-to-eat,” “washed,” or “triple washed” need not be washed.

Follow Safe Grilling Tips

Grilling and picnicking often go hand-in-hand. And just as with cooking indoors, there are important guidelines that should be followed to ensure that your grilled food reaches the table safely.

- **Marinate safely.** Marinate foods in the refrigerator — never on the kitchen counter or outdoors. In addition, if you plan to use some of the marinade as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion separately before adding the raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Don’t reuse marinade.
- **Cook immediately after “partial cooking.”** Partial cooking before grilling is only safe when the partially cooked food can go on the hot grill immediately, for example at a home with a grill on the patio or deck.
- **Cook food thoroughly.** When it’s time to cook the food, have your food thermometer ready. Always use it to be sure your food is cooked thoroughly. (See Safe Food Temperature Chart below)
- **Keep “ready” food hot.** Grilled food can be kept hot until served by moving it to the side of the grill rack, just away from the coals. This keeps it hot but prevents overcooking.
- **Don’t reuse platters or utensils.** Using the same platter or utensils that previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood allows bacteria from the raw food’s juices to spread to the cooked food. Instead, have a clean platter and utensils ready at grill-side to serve your food.
- **Check for foreign objects in food.** If you clean your grill using a bristle brush, check to make sure that no detached bristles have made their way into grilled food.

Picnic and barbecue season offers lots of opportunities for outdoor fun. Remember these simple guidelines to keep your outdoor event enjoyable and safe.

Find more information about these topics and others, by contacting the Wildcat Extension District offices at: Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Wilson County, 620-378-2167; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district.

For more information, contact Barbara Ames, Family and Consumers Sciences Agent, bames@ksu.edu, (620)331-2690.

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SAFE COOKING TEMPERATURES

as measured with a food thermometer

GROUND MEAT & MEAT MIXTURES

Internal temperature

Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb _____ 160 °F

Turkey, Chicken _____ 165 °F

FRESH BEEF, PORK, VEAL & LAMB

_____ 145 °F

with a 3 minute rest time

POULTRY

Chicken & Turkey, Whole _____ 165 °F

Poultry Parts _____ 165 °F

Duck & Goose _____ 165 °F

Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird) _____ 165 °F

HAM

Fresh (raw) _____ 160 °F

Pre-cooked (to reheat) _____ 140 °F

EGGS & EGG DISHES

Eggs _____ Cook until yolk & white are firm

Egg Dishes _____ 160 °F

SEAFOOD

Fin Fish _____ 145 °F

or flesh is opaque and separates easily with fork

Shrimp, Lobster & Crabs _____ Flesh pearly & opaque

Clams, Oysters & Mussels _____ Shells open during cooking

Scallops _____ Milky white or opaque & firm

LEFTOVERS & CASSEROLES

_____ 165 °F