

# Food Safety for Picnics & Grilling

Picnics, barbecues and potlucks are wonderful ways to celebrate Summer holidays. But take care to prepare and transport food safely. Whether your picnic is an elaborate affair for dozens of friends or a simple cookout for family, a little planning will help prevent foodborne illnesses common during summer months.

Bacteria begin to multiply between 41°F and 135°F, so it's important to keep food either cold or hot right up to the moment of cooking and/or serving.

If food is not cooked right it can make you sick. That includes under-cooked meat, poultry and seafood. And, most people don't realize contaminated fruits and vegetables are a big cause of foodborne illnesses.

You can start to feel the affects of the "not so fabulous food" anywhere from a few hours to 30 days after eating it. Therefore it is hard to pinpoint the culprit. That doesn't mean you have to fast at your picnic this summer. There are simple steps you can take (printed on the backside of this handout) to make sure that the food is actually as good as it looks.

See the other side for Clean, Separate, Cook, & Chill guidelines!



Fruit is an important part of a balanced diet. National guidelines recommend that we eat at least 5 fruits and vegetables each day. Fresh fruit, like many other foods, can pose a risk if not prepared or stored properly.

Following some simple guidelines will help keep your fruit fresh as well as safe.

- When you buy cut melons, be sure they have been buried in ice or displayed in a refrigerated case, not just displayed on top of ice. Uncut melon does not need to be refrigerated.
- Before cutting, the outer surface of the melon should be scrubbed and washed with drinking water to remove surface dirt.
- Hands and all equipment and utensils (cutting boards, knives, etc.) need to be washed thoroughly with hot soapy water, and rinsed.
- Cut melons must be refrigerated at 41°F or below.
- Cut melons may be served without refrigeration for a maximum of 2 hours (such as at a brunch, picnic, or buffet).
- At the end of that time, any leftover melon must be thrown away.
- Other fruits (such as oranges, apples, lemons, and pineapple) are higher in acid and not as potentially dangerous. All fruit should be washed before serving.



## Clean

### *HANDS*

Use soap and very warm water, scrubbing for 20 seconds. Rinse well and dry.

### *TABLES AND COUNTERS*

Use hot soapy water then use a clean towel or paper towel to dry.

### *FRUITS AND VEGETABLES*

Rinse and scrub under running water.

## Separate

Use two separate cutting boards: one for raw meat only and a different one for fresh-washed produce only.

Keep your utensils separate to keep the germs that are naturally occurring on the raw meat from getting onto the fresh washed produce.

Keep raw animal foods away from ready to eat foods like cooked hamburgers and buns. Always place cooked meat on a clean plate that has been washed. If any of the raw meat juices get into the cooked meat it is now contaminated again.

Cook foods to proper temperature. It is important to check the internal temperature of food you are cooking. You need to use a clean and calibrated food thermometer for this.

Place the thermometer stem into the food you are testing to see if it reaches the right temperature. The magic temperature to remember is 165°F. Using a food thermometer will also give you the juiciest meat because you won't overcook it which causes meat to be dry and tough. Disinfect the thermometer (with Clorox or alcohol wipes) when moving from cooked foods to raw foods.

Food can only be out in the temperature danger zone (between 41°F and 135°F) for 2 hours. After that you need to throw it out. Use crock pots, warming plates, or chaffing pans to keep hot foods hot (135°F or above).

Cold Food should always be kept cold at 41°F or below. Place small bowls of dip, salads and other cold foods on ice in a larger bowl to keep foods cold (41°F or below). Also, only place small portions of food out and replenish as needed.

Remember, **CLEAN, SEPARATE, COOK & CHILL** to beat the nasty germs that can make you sick. For more information on safe food handling, visit [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org) or [www.richlandhealth.org](http://www.richlandhealth.org) or call 419-774-4500.

### Transporting Food

- Make sure your cooler will keep food at 41°F, or plan foods that are less perishable, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, cheese, peanut butter, etc.
- Keep drinks in a separate cooler since it will be opened more often. Here's a great tip: freeze your water bottles and use them to keep your ready to eat foods cold.
- Plan ahead; try to take only what will be eaten so you won't have leftovers. Food that has been out of the refrigerator for 2 hours should be thrown out.
- Don't partially pre-cook meat or poultry before transporting; cook until done and then chill before packing in the cooler.
- Pack condiments in small containers rather than taking whole jars.
- Keep coolers in the inside of the car rather than the hot trunk, then in the shade at you picnic site. Add new bags of ice often. Hint: place ice in zip sealed plastic bags and layer between your food items to keep all food cool and at 41°F and below.
- If you cook food ahead of time, chill thoroughly before putting it in the cooler. If you take hot food, wrap the dish in aluminum foil and towels to keep it above 135°F; if it's a long trip (2 hours) it is best not to take a hot dish.
- Take-out foods like fried chicken or barbecue should be eaten within 2 hours of purchase or thoroughly chilled before adding to the cooler and transporting.



## Cook

## Chill



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