



Felician Village

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Top Nine Food Safety Tips for Summer Cook Outs

It's time for summer fun and cook outs! But what do you need to know about keeping your food safe in the hot weather? Warm temperatures create the best environment to support the growth of harmful bacteria. Keep your family, friends and food safe by following these simple food safety tips.

#1: Separate raw and cooked foods

Do not use the same plate you carried the raw burgers out to the grill - to take them off the grill! Use one plate to bring the raw meats out and a completely different plate for the freshly cooked meats coming off the grill. The same rule applies for utensils. Not doing this can cause cross contamination and grow some unpleasant bacteria that will definitely rain on your parade.

#2: WASH YOUR HANDS

Any time you touch raw foods. Any time you are prepping cut vegetables. Any time you are pulling meat from a marinade and go to grab your tongs, wash your hands. Sing happy birthday twice to yourself as you lather with soap – should be good to go after that. This is critical.

#3: A thermometer is your best friend

This is the number one tool to make certain your grilled meats are cooked to the correct temperature to destroy pesky pathogens. Nothing under 145°F

#4: Monitor leftovers

No picnic foods should ever be left out at room temperature for over 2 hours and still eaten. If it's really hot -- above 90°F – you only have 1 hour. Package this food right after serving the meal. Throw away any unrefrigerated food if it's been sitting out. If you know that the food will be sitting for the afternoon as guests come and go – you can put cold foods on ice for up to four hours. I use two bowls – one with ice on the bottom, one on top with the potato salad. Hot foods can be put in a crock pot or nesco for up to 4 hours.

#5: Do NOT re-use marinades

We all love a good marinade. But be certain to discard any leftover used marinade—this will ensure raw meat juices do not get on your cooked food. If you plan to use the marinade as a sauce for your meat as well, set some aside before marinating the meat.

#6: Pack your cooler safely

Any kind of raw meat should be packed in a separate cooler if at all possible and surrounded by ice. If that is not possible, I like to wrap the meat in an extra plastic bag or two – much like they do when they bag your groceries. This is added security that your raw meat juice doesn't end up all over your bowl of fruit.

#7: Please always carefully defrost meat

Plan ahead as much as possible. Force thaw items by running cold water over them in a colander or in a zip lock bag in the sink until thawed. Leaving raw meat and poultry on your countertop to defrost is dangerous – plain and simple. Plan ahead and defrost meat 1-2 days in advance in the refrigerator is ideal. A microwave can be used in a pinch if you are cooking the meat right away.

#8: Always wash your produce

Fruits and veggies should always be rinsed in cool water before eating. A spray bottle with 1 to 3 parts white vinegar and water is a natural way to clean your fruits and vegetables. Spray and let them sit for a minute, then rinse them off again. Always wash melons too before you slice or peel them. This will make sure bacteria isn't transferred from the knife to your fruit.

#9: Wash your grocery bags

If you use the reusable grocery bags, it's important to wash them regularly. Studies found that harmful bacteria can linger in your totes and hitch a ride with ready-to-eat foods like produce.

In parting ways, remember to be safe hosting your summer parties or bringing a dish to pass. You do not want to be the person responsible for getting your family or friends sick with unsafe food.

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