

# Barbeque Safety

## ***GET READY!***

**WARM WEATHER IS ON ITS WAY AND OUR THOUGHTS TURN TO THOSE SUMMER COOKOUTS. WARM TEMPERATURES, HOWEVER, ARE IDEAL FOR BACTERIA AND OTHER PATHOGENS TO MULTIPLY AND CAUSE FOODBORNE ILLNESS.**

**USE THESE SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR GRILLING FOOD SAFELY.**

### ***SHOPPING AT THE STORE:***

When shopping for meats, poultry and other potentially hazardous foods, put them in your shopping cart last, right before you check out of the store. To guard against cross-contamination (which can happen when raw meat or poultry juices drip onto other foods), put packages of raw meat and poultry into plastic bags.

When loading your groceries into your vehicle, put the meats, poultry and other potentially hazardous foods in the cool car – not the trunk – and take them straight home. If you live more than 30 minutes away from the grocery store, it is a good idea to bring along a cooler with ice from home to place perishable food in for the trip.

Once you get home, place perishable foods in the refrigerator immediately. Freeze poultry and ground meat that won't be used in 1 or 2 days.

### ***DEFROST SAFELY:***

Completely thaw meat and poultry before grilling it so it cooks more evenly. Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing; microwave defrost if the foods will be immediately placed on the grill; or thaw sealed packages in *cold* water.

### ***MARINATING:***

Some recipes state to marinate meat and poultry for several hours or days, either to tenderize or add flavor. Always marinate food in the refrigerator – not on the counter.

If some of the marinade is to be used as sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion of the marinade prior to putting the meat into it. **Do not re-use the marinade used on raw meat or poultry unless it's boiled first to destroy any possible bacteria.**

### ***PRE-COOKING:***

Some people like to cook food partially in the microwave, oven, or stove to reduce grilling time. Pre-cook *immediately before* grilling to destroy bacteria.

### ***TRANSPORTING:***

When carrying food to a picnic site, keep it cold to minimize bacteria growth. If take-out foods such as fried chicken or barbecued beef will be reheated on the grill, and they won't be eaten within two hours of pick-up, buy them ahead of time and chill thoroughly.

Use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Then pack food right from the refrigerator into the cooler immediately before leaving home.

In the car, keep the cooler in the air conditioned passenger area; at the picnic, in the shade or shelter.

### ***KEEP COLD FOODS COLD:***

Avoid opening the cooler's lid, which lets cold air out and warm air in. Pack beverages in one cooler and perishables in another cooler.

When handling raw meat, remove from the cooler only the amount that will fit on the grill.

### ***KEEP EVERYTHING CLEAN:***

Be sure there are plenty of clean utensils and platters for separately handling the raw foods and the food after cooking. **Don't use the same platter or utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry.** Any bacteria present in the raw meat juices can contaminate the safely cooked meat. This is a prime cause of summer foodborne illness.

Pack clean, soapy sponges, cloths and wet towelettes for cleaning surfaces and hands.

### ***COOKING SAFELY:***

Meat and poultry cooked on the grill browns very fast on the outside. Use a meat thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends the following internal cooking temperatures:

<i>WHOLE POULTRY:</i>	<i>180 degrees Fahrenheit</i>
<i>POULTRY BREASTS:</i>	<i>170 degrees Fahrenheit</i>
<i>GROUND MEAT:</i>	<i>160 degrees Fahrenheit</i>
<i>BEEF, VEAL, and LAMB STEAKS, ROASTS and CHOPS:</i>	<i>145 degrees Fahrenheit</i>
<i>ALL CUTS OF PORK:</i>	<i>160 degrees Fahrenheit</i>

Never partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later. Cook food completely to destroy harmful bacteria. When reheating take-out foods or fully cooked meats like hot dogs, grill to 165 degrees Fahrenheit (or until steaming hot).

### ***KEEP HOT FOODS HOT:***

After cooking meat and poultry on the grill (at home or at a picnic), **keep it hot until served!** Keep the cooked meats hot by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals where they would eventually overcook.

At home, the cooked meat can be kept hot in a 200-degree oven, in a chafing dish or slow cooker, or on a warming tray. After cooking, hold hot food at 140 degrees Fahrenheit or warmer.

### ***SERVING THE FOOD:***

When taking food off the grill, do not put the cooked items on the same platter that held the raw meat. Any bacteria present in the raw meat juices could contaminate the safely cooked meat or other grilled foods.

In hot weather (90 degrees Fahrenheit and above), **food should never sit out for more than one hour.**

**HANDLING LEFTOVERS:**

At home, store leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer within 2 hours of taking the food off the grill. Leftovers that have been off the grill for less than 1 hour can be safely transported home in a cooler – if there is plenty of ice in it.

Discard any food left out more than 2 hours (1 hour in hot weather).

**GRILLING SAFETY CHECKS:**

- Take meat and poultry straight home from the store and refrigerate.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator.
- Don't re-use marinade unless boiled.
- Pre-cook immediately before placing food on the grill.
- Don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meats.

*(Source: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA)*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL TOLL-FREE:**

***USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline: 1 (800) 535-4555***

***Washington DC (202) 720-3333***

***<http://www.usda.gov/fsis>***