

Picnics: Stay Food Safety Savvy!

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Summer holidays provide a break from school and work, but we shouldn't break from being smart about food safety. More care is needed since foodborne illnesses increase during the summer. Bacteria love the hot, humid days of summer, and grow faster than at any other time of the year. At the same time temperatures rise, we're more likely to leave food unrefrigerated for longer periods of time at picnics, barbecues and during travel. Summer picnics are a great way to enjoy the outdoors and each others' company. Keep your picnics with family and friends safe this summer by remembering the following tips.



Tips to stay food safety savvy on picnics:

- **Temperature and time.** Keep picnics with family and friends safe by remembering that the time perishable food can be left outside the fridge or freezer drops from two hours to one hour in temperatures above 90 °F.



- **Hot and Cold.** Keep hot food hot and cold food cold on the way to, and throughout, your picnics and outdoor gatherings. Holding food at an unsafe temperature is a prime cause of foodborne illness.

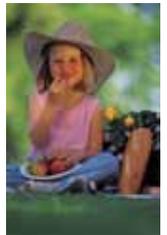


- **Food Thermometer.** According to USDA research, 1 out of every 4 hamburgers turns brown in the middle before reaching a safe internal temperature. The only way to be sure food is safely cooked is to use a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature. Using a food thermometer keeps you safe from harmful food bacteria and helps avoid overcooking, keeping it juicy and flavorful.

- **USDA Recommendations.** USDA has revised its recommended cooking temperature for all whole cuts (steaks, roasts, and chops) of meat, including pork, beef, lamb and veal to 145 °F, and then allowing a 3 minute rest time before carving or consuming. During the 3 minutes after meat is removed from the heat source, its temperature remains constant or continues to rise, which destroys pathogens.



- **Bring non-perishable foods.** Reduce the worry of keeping foods at certain temperatures by limiting the number of perishable foods on the menu. Bring baked potato chips or pretzels instead of potato salad; dried fruit or fruit cups in their natural juices instead of a cut up fruit salad; and other non-perishable snacks such as trail mix, nuts, or sunflower seeds.



- **Two coolers are better than one.** Bring two coolers to the park or gathering, one for perishable food and one for beverages. Keep perishable foods cool by transporting them in an insulated cooler kept cold with ice or frozen gel packs and open as infrequently as possible.



- **Keep it clean.** During picnics it is important to keep things clean. Check ahead and find out if there's a source of safe drinking water at your destination. If not, bring water for preparation and cleaning; or pack clean, wet, disposable cloths or moist towelettes and paper towels for cleaning hands and surfaces.



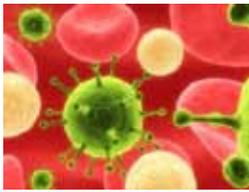
Know how. Know now.



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- **Dangers of Cross Contamination.** Cross-contamination is the transfer of harmful bacteria to food from other foods, cutting boards, utensils, etc., if they are not handled properly. Cross-contamination during preparing, grilling, and serving food is a prime cause of foodborne illness. Remember to always wash your hands before and after handling food, and don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry. Include lots of clean utensils, not only for eating but also for serving the safely cooked food.



Picnics are extremely popular all throughout the summer and during the month of July you see picnics everywhere. One of the reasons is that many families take their vacations in July and spend much of their time outdoors enjoying the warm weather. The "road" to food safety, however, can either be bumpy or smooth — depending on what precautions are taken handling meals as we travel during the summer. Check out www.food.unl.edu for more food, nutrition, and health information on various topics.



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