

SUMMER COOKOUTS & PICNIC FOOD SAFETY TIPS



ACHD offers food safety tips for cookouts and picnics throughout the summer:

- The key to preventing food poisoning is good personal hygiene, along with temperature control and adequate cooking of potentially hazardous foods, according to health officials.
- Washing your hands is not only important before preparing foods but also between handling raw and ready-to-eat foods to prevent cross-contamination or the transfer of bacteria. Washing with soap and warm water is best, but if they won't be available on your outing take moist towelettes with an antiseptic.
- Meat, poultry and seafood should be cooked thoroughly and the best way to know if these foods have been cooked enough is to check their temperature with a meat thermometer.
- Safe cooking temperatures are 145° F for all whole cuts of meat, with a three-minute rest time before carving or consuming; 145° F for seafood; 160° F for all ground meats, including hamburgers; and 165° F for poultry. Hot dogs and other processed or precooked meats such as kielbasa should be reheated to 145° F.
- If you don't have a meat thermometer, follow these guidelines but remember they're not as reliable as temperature as an indicator of doneness: beef and pork should be grilled until all the pink is gone, poultry until there is no red in the joints and fresh fish until it flakes with a fork.
- Use different plates and utensils to carry raw meats and cooked meats to and from the grill so bacteria-laden juices left on the plate from raw meat don't come in contact with and contaminate cooked meat.
- Once perishables such as meat, poultry, fish and any foods containing eggs or dairy products are cooked and served, any leftovers should be kept below 40° F or above 140° F. If these foods can't be kept hot or cold, they should be thrown out after two hours.
- Make sure you have a well-insulated cooler with plenty of ice and take along a refrigerator thermometer to make sure the cooler keeps the temperature below 40° F. Store food in watertight containers. Keep the cooler out of the sun and use a separate one for beverages.