

Make league's barbecues safe

Keep food safe from bacteria, check grill for problems

Barbecue Safety

Safely transporting food, precooking and preventing cross-contamination are the major ingredients of barbecue safety.

Chill Foods to Stop Bacteria

When transporting food, either from the grocery store or to a picnic area, keep it cool to minimize bacterial growth. Pack meat, poultry, salads and other perishables in an insulated cooler with ice.

Marinade is a savory acidic sauce in which a food is soaked to tenderize and add flavor. Always marinate meats in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Reserve a portion of the marinade that hasn't touched raw meat for a dip or basting sauce. Don't reuse marinade used on raw meat or poultry unless it has been boiled first to destroy any bacteria.

Take Care With Meat Items

Meats and poultry may be precooked on the stove, microwave or oven to reduce grilling times. If foods are partially precooked, place immediately on the grill to finish cooking. Never partially cook meats and poultry and wait to finish cooking later. If meats and poultry are completely cooked ahead of time and chilled, they may be reheated on the grill to provide a barbecued flavor.

If take-out foods such as fried chicken or barbecued beef will be reheated on the grill, and they won't be reheated/eaten within two hours of purchase, buy them ahead of time and chill thoroughly.

Keep Foods Separate, Clean Up Often

Don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meats and poultry. Be sure there are plenty of clean utensils and platters to allow separate handling of raw foods and cooked foods. Pack clean, soapy sponges, clothes and wet towelettes for cleaning surfaces and hands. There is an antibacterial soap on the market now that does not need water and would be ideal to carry on a picnic for cleaning platters and utensils.

Cook Foods Thoroughly

Cook everything thoroughly. Rare or medium meat or poultry can harbor harmful bacteria. Fish should always be

"Can you give us some advice on barbecue safety? Every Saturday we have a barbecue during the ball games. Are there guidelines for sanitizing utensils between each use, maintaining food (such as hamburger beef and tomatoes) to ensure we keep PHFs out of the temperature danger zones, using and storing propane tanks, and any other barbecue safety info?"

**Douglas Polgar, safety officer
Sierra Little League,
Sunnyvale, Calif.**

fully cooked. For greatest safety, ground meat should reach 160° F on a meat thermometer, and poultry should reach 180° F for doneness. Since grilled food often browns very fast on the outside, make a "sample cut" to visually check for doneness. The juices should run clear and meat should not be pink, although meat color is not accurate (check Page 3).

Based on current research findings, eating moderate amounts of grilled meats, fish, and poultry, cooked thoroughly without charring, does not pose a health problem.

Resources:

- USDA Consumer Information Publication.1996. "Barbecue Food Safety".
 - Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA Food Safety Publications.1996.
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/barbecue.pdf>
 - USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline: 1-800-535-4555
- Material written by Mary Abgrall and Scottie Misner, May 1998. Part of Food Safety Tips, College of Agriculture, University of Arizona. Document located at <http://ag.arizona.edu/pubs/health/foodsafety/az1069.html>

Grilling Safety

According to the Insurance Information Institute, backyard barbecues result in more than 2,000 fires and even three deaths each year. Most problems happen when you fire up a grill that hasn't been used for several months.

Gas grill: check it over thoroughly before using it. Check for leaks, cracking or brittleness, and clean out the tubes that lead into the burner — look for blockages from spiders or food waste.

Make sure the grill is at least 10 feet from *any* buildings or trees. And never leave the grill unattended.

Charcoal grill: use starter fluid sparingly and never put it on an open flame. And it's always best to have a fire extinguisher nearby... it can stop a fire before it spreads.

Also, be careful if you pick up gas canisters... never leave them in a hot car. The heat could cause some of the gas to leak out.

(Also, see the April, 2000 ASAP News for more food tips.)

USDA encourages use of thermometers

WASHINGTON, D.C — The United States Department of Agriculture launched a new food safety education campaign in Spring 2000 to promote the use of food thermometers. The campaign theme is: “It’s Safe to Bite When the Temperature is Right!”

“This national food safety education campaign is designed to encourage consumers to use a food thermometer when cooking meat, poultry, and egg products. Using a food thermometer is the only way to tell when food has reached a high enough temperature to destroy harmful pathogens that may be in the raw food,” said Under Secretary for Food Safety Catherine Woteki.

“Color is misleading and should not be relied on to indicate a safely cooked product. Meat or poultry color can fool even the most experienced cook. USDA research shows that one out of every four hamburgers turns brown in the middle before it is safely cooked,” Woteki said.

USDA introduced its new messenger, “Thermy™,” to promote the use of food thermometers in the home.

“Consumers will soon see ‘Thermy™’ at many retail stores and in broadcast messages as a reminder to purchase and use a food thermometer when cooking,”

Woteki said.

Tom Billy, USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service administrator, said, “I am concerned that... only a small percent of consumers use (food thermometers) often when cooking small foods like hamburgers, pork chops, or chicken breasts.”

Food thermometers help ensure food is cooked to a safe temperature, prevent overcooking, and take the guesswork out of preparing a safe meal. “Food thermometers should be used every time you prepare hamburgers, poultry, roasts, chops, egg casseroles, meat loaves, and combination dishes,” says Billy.

Billy said that there are a wide variety of reliable food thermometers available in grocery and kitchen stores, and that many are inexpensive. “They are high-tech and easy to use. Their cost is minimal when considering your family’s safety. This is especially true for people who are at high risk, including young children, pregnant women, people over 65, and those with chronic illnesses.”



Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA



Prepare for dangerous storms



In baseball, three strikes and you’re out. With lightning, one strike is all it takes.

When considering lightning, safety officers should think in terms of preparation, rather than prevention. Lightning and dangerous storms cannot be stopped. At any given time, more than 2000 thunderstorms are in progress around the world. Strikes to earth are random, and total protection from lightning impossible. However, leagues can reduce the risk of catastrophe by educating personnel and developing an evacuation plan.

The National Lightning Safety Institute lists six steps to safety for outdoor athletic events:

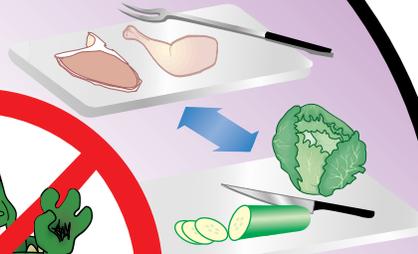
1. **A responsible person should be designated to monitor weather conditions.** Local weather forecasts should be monitored 24 hours prior to events. A portable weather radio is recommended.
2. **Suspension and resumption of activities should be planned in advance.** Safe evacuation sites include metal vehicles with windows up, enclosed buildings, or if necessary, low ground.
3. **Unsafe shelter areas include all outdoor metallic objects like flag poles, fences, light poles, and metal bleachers.** Avoid trees, water, open fields, and using the telephone.
4. **Lightning’s distance from you can be referenced by noting the time from its flash to the bang of associated thunder.** For each five second count, lightning is one mile away, i.e. 10 seconds = 2 miles. Since the distance from one strike to the next can be up to 1.5 miles, the NLSI suggests you activate your lightning evacuation plan *no later* than a count of 15.
5. **If you feel your hair standing on end or hear “crackling noises,” you are in lightning’s electric field.** Immediately remove metal objects and objects with metal pieces like baseball caps, place your feet together, duck your head, and crouch like a catcher with hands on knees.
6. **People struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge and are safe to handle.** Apply CPR immediately if qualified, and get emergency help.

FIGHT BAC!

CLEAN
Wash hands
and surfaces
often.



SEPARATE
Don't cross-
contaminate.



CHILL
Refrigerate
promptly.



COOK
Cook to proper
temperatures.



Keep Food Safe From Bacteria

TM



Thermy™ says:

"It's Safe to Bite
When The Temperature is Right!"

Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA