

Keeping Outdoor Food Fun and Safe

Summer activities often include food as part of the fun. Don't let mishandling of food lead to food borne illness. Learn how practicing a few simple steps will help keep food safe.

Bring soap to wash hands when you are on the road for a picnic or cookout. Soap and water is preferred, but hand sanitizer works if running water is not available.

Keep raw meat separate from ready to eat foods. If necessary, pack raw foods in a separate cooler than pre-cooked or ready to eat foods.

When preparing meat or poultry, use a food thermometer to make sure food is cooked to a safe internal temperature. Poultry should be cooked to 165° F; ground meats should be cooked to 160° F, and steak, chops and roasts (beef, pork) should be cooked until 145° F with a 3 minute rest.

Keeping food at proper temperatures - indoor and out - is critical in preventing the growth of food borne bacteria. The key is to never let your food remain in the "Danger Zone" - temperatures between 40° F and 140 °F for more than 2 hours (or 1 hour if outdoor temperatures are above 90° F). The danger zone is when bacteria in food can multiply rapidly and lead to food borne illness.

Cold perishable food should be kept in the cooler at 40° F or below until serving time.

-Food should not sit out for longer than 2 hours. If it does, discard it.

Foods like chicken salad and desserts in individual serving dishes can be placed directly on ice, or in a shallow container set in a deep pan filled with ice. Drain off water as ice melts and replace ice frequently. If you have lots of dishes that need to be chilled, use a child size plastic swimming pool filled with ice.

- Pack plenty of ice. Leftover food is safe only if the cooler still has ice in it.

Hot food should be kept hot, at or above 140° F.

- Wrap it well and place it in an insulated container until serving.

- Just as with cold food - hot food should not sit out for more than 2 hours or 1 hour in temperatures above 90° F. If food is left out longer, throw it away to be safe.

These steps will keep food safe and not interrupt your summer fun. Helping families and community partners connect with resources is a key component of K-State Research and Extension. Our office team is working remotely while our physical office is closed, please contact us at 221-5450 or 441-4565.

Source: Partnership for Food Safety Education; FDA Food Facts

K-State Research and Extension — all in-person events have been canceled through July 4

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