

## Bacteria Growth

If you visited my kitchen, you would notice a few science experiments in progress. My daughter is growing a starter for sour dough bread and I have peels and other food waste destined for my compost. Bacteria is at work; and in these examples, working for good.

Many different disease-causing germs can contaminate foods, so there are many different food borne infections caused by a variety of bacteria, viruses and parasites. You've heard of Salmonella, E.coli and Listeria — these are just a few types of bacteria that cause food borne illness.

Bacteria multiply faster in warmer temperatures, so this is a great for my compost. However, temperature abused food can allow bacteria to grow and multiply every 20 minutes.

Here are tips to help keep your picnic and barbecue safe:

- **Cook food to the recommended internal temperature.** If bacteria are present on food, they can be killed by cooking meat properly. There is no need to wash meat or poultry. Marinate meat in the refrigerator and discard unused marinade. For popular picnic foods, the suggested internal temperatures are 165° Fahrenheit for poultry; 160° F for ground meat and hamburgers; and 145° F for beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks or chops.
- **Chill foods that won't be in a refrigerator.** Use several ice chests to store cold food below 40° F and keep it cold until meal time. Don't leave picnic food out for more than two hours or one hour if outdoor temperatures are above 90° F. Once the meal is finished, put leftovers on ice or in the refrigerator promptly.
- **Clean produce, surfaces and hands regularly.** Wash produce with plain water before prepping or cooking. Rub or scrub when possible to remove dirt. Clean surfaces often. When washing hands, any soap that produces bubbles -- which break up bacteria and germs -- will work. Rub between fingers, back of hands and up your arms, too. If you don't have running water, moist disposable towelettes are a good choice.
- **Separate foods.** Keep raw foods away from ready-to-eat foods. Use separate plates and utensils for raw meat and cooked meat. Or, wash plates and utensils before using them for cooked meat.

Helping families and community partners connect with resources is a key component of K-State Research and Extension. Our office will reopen for public access on July 6, but we still encourage you to make an appointment if you need to meet with a staff member. Contact us at 221-5450 or 441-4565

*Source: Karen Blakeslee, Rapid Response Center Coordinator, K-State Research and Extension*

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