

Summer Food Safety

SAFE FOOD HANDLING IN THE SUMMER HEAT!

The risk of food poisoning can increase during the summer because harmful bacteria grow quickly in warm, moist conditions. Always remember to keep food out of the temperature danger zone of 4°C to 60°C (40°F to 140°F). Harmful bacteria can grow in as little as two hours in this temperature range. Remember these five things when preparing foods in summer:

Chill

- Keep perishable foods cold using a cooler with ice or cooler packs; the internal temp of the cooler should be below 4°C.
- Keep cooler out of direct sunlight and avoid opening the door too often.
- Do not keep room Temperature food out longer than one hour on hot sunny days.

Separate

- Keep your raw meat, poultry, and seafood separate from other foods to avoid spreading harmful bacteria. Using containers or re-sealable plastic bags will help prevent leaks.
- Put raw meat, poultry, and seafood at the bottom of the cooler to keep juices from dripping onto other foods.
- Insects can carry dangerous bacteria such as E.coli. Place covers over food to prevent coming in contact with insects.

Clean

- Washing your hands for 20 seconds in warm soapy water before cooking can help you avoid cross-contamination and prevent food poisoning.
- Follow the same washing instructions outdoors as you do at home:
 - Use clean water and soap to thoroughly wash all cooking utensils used for food preparation.
 - Sanitize cooking equipment and work surfaces with a mild bleach solution to kill all bacteria.
 - Rinse with fresh water and air dry.

Cook

- Use an internal cooking thermometer to cook all raw meat, poultry and seafood to a recommended safe internal temperature. See www.healthykanadians.gc.ca for more information.
- Use a clean plate when taking food off the grill. Never put ready-to-eat or cooked food on a plate that was used for raw meat, poultry or seafood--wash the plate first. Keeping several sets of clean utensils, cutting boards, and plates on hand will help you prevent cross-contamination.

Leftovers

- Cool food quickly in shallow containers. On hot summer days, don't keep food at room temperature for more than one hour.
- Store leftovers in cooler until you are able to properly refrigerate.