

GETTING THE GRILL BACK OUT? DON'T FORGET ABOUT FOOD SAFETY!

By Clara Wicoff



With the start of summer, you may be getting ready to start grilling again. Don't forget about food safety! There are several key steps you can take to ensure your grilling festivities aren't ruined by foodborne illness.

To start, if this is your first time using the grill after a long winter, you will want to soak the grates in a mixture of vinegar and baking soda to remove residues. Use a bristle brush, soap, and water to clean them. You will also want to clean it after every use.

Like with any time you are cooking, you will want to wash your hands before you start. If you are going to be grilling somewhere where soap and water will be unavailable, bring some with you. Alternatively, moist towelettes and bleach wipes can also be used for cleaning hands and surfaces.



Next, remember to separate raw and cooked foods. Make sure you use a different plate for holding the cooked meat than the one you used for raw meat. You should also use a different cutting board and utensils for raw and cooked foods.

The next step is to ensure you cook food thoroughly to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. You must use a food thermometer to ensure the food has reached a safe temperature because you cannot tell if food is fully cooked just by looking at it. Without touching bone, fat, or gristle, place the food thermometer in the thickest part of the food. Beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks, chops, and roasts must be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 145 degrees and then allowed to rest for three minutes after being removed from the grill before carving or consuming. All ground meats must be cooked to an internal temperature of 160 degrees. Finally, poultry should be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees.

Once you have enjoyed your meal, you need to refrigerate leftovers promptly. Leftovers must be refrigerated within two hours (or within one hour if the temperature is greater than 90 degrees). Any food left out longer than that should be thrown away. If you are reheating leftovers, they must be reheated or grilled to 165 degrees.

For more information, please contact Clara Wicoff, Nutrition, Food and Health Extension Agent, at clarawicoff@ksu.edu or 620-365-2242.