



# Summer Barbecue and Food Safety

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**Firing up the grill may be the largest safety hazard of the summer season. Use caution when grilling with open flame and careful when using charcoal lighter fluid. Nearly 5,000 people are injured annually while grilling.**

## **BEFORE BARBECUING:**

- Check your grill thoroughly for leaks, cracking or brittleness before using it.
- Check the tubes leading to the burner regularly for blockages. Check your specific grill manufacturer's instructions.
- Make sure the grill is at least 10 feet away from your house, garage or trees.
- Store and use your grill on a large flat surface that cannot burn (i.e.- concrete or asphalt).
- Don't use grills in a garage, on a porch, deck or on top of anything that can catch on fire. Never use a propane barbecue grill on a balcony, terrace or roof; it is both dangerous and illegal.
- Keep children away from fires and grills. It is a good idea to establish a safety zone around the grill and instruct children to remain outside the zone.
- Before getting a propane cylinder filled, check for any damages to it.
- Never transport or store propane cylinders in the trunk of your automobile.



## **DURING BARBECUING:**

- Keep children away from the grill.
- Don't wear loose clothing that might catch fire.
- Use long-handled barbecue tools and/or flame-resistant mitts.
- Never use any flammable liquid other than a barbecue starter fluid to start/freshen a fire
- Never pour or squirt starter fluid onto an open flame. The flame can easily flashback along the fluid's path to the container in your hands
- Keep alcoholic beverages away from the grill; they are flammable
- Never leave the grill unattended

## **Food safety is easy to overlook at summer picnics. These easy tips from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) ensure a deliciously healthy BBQ:**

- **Keep cold food cold with ice or frozen gel packs. Cold food should be stored at 40°F or below.**
- **Keep coolers closed. This keeps the contents cold longer.**
- **Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat/poultry/seafood wrapped to avoid contaminating other picnic foods.**
- **Clean your produce. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables before packing**

### **From the Store: Go Straight Home**

When shopping; buy cold food like meat and poultry last, right before checkout. Separate raw meat and poultry from other food in your shopping cart. To guard against cross-contamination — which can happen when raw meat or poultry juices drip on other food — put packages of raw meat and poultry into plastic bags.

Plan to drive directly home from the grocery store. You may want to take a cooler with ice for perishables. Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours. Refrigerate within 1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F.

At home, place meat and poultry in the refrigerator immediately. Freeze poultry and ground meat that won't be used in 1 or 2 days; freeze other meat within 4 to 5 days.

### **Thaw Safely**

Completely thaw meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks more evenly. Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing or thaw sealed packages in cold water. You can microwave defrost if the food will be placed immediately on the grill.

### **Marinating**

A marinade is a savory, acidic sauce in which a food is soaked to enrich its flavor or to tenderize it. Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Poultry and cubed meat or stew meat can be marinated up to 2 days. Beef, veal, pork, and lamb roasts, chops, and steaks may be marinated up to 5 days. If some of the marinade is to be used as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion of the marinade before putting raw meat and poultry in it.

**Note: If the marinade used on raw meat or poultry is to be reused, make sure to let it come to a boil first to destroy any harmful bacteria.**

## **Transporting**

When carrying food to another location; keep it cold to minimize bacterial growth. Use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40 °F or below. Pack food right from the refrigerator into the cooler immediately before leaving home.

## **Keep Cold Food Cold**

Keep meat and poultry refrigerated until ready to use. Only take out the meat and poultry that will immediately be placed on the grill.

When using a cooler, keep it out of the direct sun by placing it in the shade or shelter. Avoid opening the lid too often, which lets cold air out and warm air in. Pack beverages in one cooler and perishables in a separate cooler.

## **Keep Everything Clean**

Be sure there are plenty of clean utensils and platters. To prevent foodborne illness, don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry. Harmful bacteria present in raw meat and poultry and their juices can contaminate safely cooked food.

If you're eating away from home, find out if there's a source of clean water. If not, bring water for preparation and cleaning. Or pack clean cloths, and wet towelettes for cleaning surfaces and hands.

## **Precooking**

Precooking food partially in the microwave, oven, or stove is a good way of reducing grilling time. Just make sure that the food goes immediately on the preheated grill to complete cooking.

## **Cook Thoroughly**

Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature. Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts and chops can be cooked to 145 °F. Hamburgers made of ground beef should reach 160 °F. All cuts of pork should reach 160 °F. All poultry should reach a minimum of 165 °F.

**NEVER partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later.**

## SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES

**Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature.**

- Whole poultry: 165 °F
- Poultry breasts: 165 °F
- Ground poultry: 165 °F
- Hamburgers, beef: 160 °F
- All cuts of pork: 160 °F
- Beef, veal, and lamb (steaks, roasts and chops):
  - Medium rare 145 °F
  - Medium 160 °F

### Reheating

When reheating fully cooked meats like hot dogs, grill to 165 °F or until steaming hot.



### Keep Hot Food Hot

After cooking meat and poultry on the grill, keep it hot until served — at 140 °F or warmer.

Keep cooked meats hot by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals where they could overcook. At home, the cooked meat can be kept hot in an oven set at approximately 200 °F, in a chafing dish or slow cooker, or on a warming tray.

### Serving the Food

When taking food off the grill, use a clean platter. Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry. Any harmful bacteria present in the raw meat juices could contaminate safely cooked food.

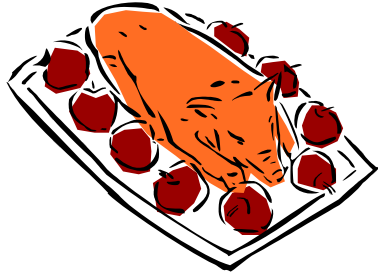
In hot weather (above 90 °F), food should never sit out for more than 1 hour.

### Leftovers

Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in shallow containers. Discard any food left out more than 2 hours (1 hour if temperatures are above 90 °F).

## Safe Smoking

Smoking is cooking food indirectly in the presence of a fire. It can be done in a covered grill if a pan of water is placed beneath the meat on the grill; and meats can be smoked in a "smoker," which is an outdoor cooker especially designed for smoking foods. Smoking is done much more slowly than grilling, so less tender meats benefit from this method, and a natural smoke flavoring permeates the meat. The temperature in the smoker should be maintained at 250 to 300 °F for safety.



## Pit Roasting

Pit roasting is cooking meat in a large, level hole dug in the earth. A hardwood fire is built in the pit, requiring wood equal to about 2½ times the volume of the pit. The hardwood is allowed to burn until the wood reduces and the pit is half filled with burning coals. This can require 4 to 6 hours burning time.

Cooking may require 10 to 12 hours or more and is difficult to estimate. A food thermometer must be used to determine the meat's safety and doneness. There are many variables such as outdoor temperature, the size and thickness of the meat, and how fast the coals are cooking.

## BARBECUE SAFELY:

- Always shut off the propane fuel at the grill and at the bottle after you have finished barbecuing. Otherwise, this will lead to fire hazards, such as leaks and faulty regulators
- Store your BBQ grill and propane cylinder outdoors

This information is provided to you by the Region X, VPPPA Communications Committee