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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Don't Sabotage Your Summer Barbeque

DEC recommends taking simple precautions to ensure your food is safe

Summer is the perfect time for a picnic or barbeque. Don't let a food-borne illness ruin your fun. Improperly prepared, cooked, or stored food is one of the main causes of food-borne illness. Practice safe food handling when cooking and eating outdoors and remember the following tips courtesy of the Department of Environmental Conservation:

Clean

- Wash your hands. Food safety begins with hand-washing, even outdoors.
- Clean cutting boards and counter tops often.
- Keep utensils and platters clean when preparing food.

Separate

- Keep meat juices away from any ready to eat foods like fruits and vegetables.
- Use one cutting board for produce and a separate one for meats.
- Use a clean platter for cooked meats and another for uncooked meats.

Cook

- Thaw or marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter or outdoors. Discard marinade after single use.
- Cook food to the appropriate temperature using a food thermometer--chicken to 165°, hamburgers to 155°, steaks and fish to 145°.
- Because summer picnics and barbecues often last for more than a few hours, food that has been cooked and left sitting on the table for several hours should not be eaten.

Chill

- Keep cold foods cold (41 °F or below) and hot foods hot (at or above 135 °F).
- To keep food cold, place directly on ice and replace ice frequently.
- Store foods promptly. Food that sits out for more than two hours at room temperature is not safe to eat. If in doubt, throw it out!

Do not sabotage your summer barbeque or picnic. Take the necessary precautions to ensure the food you serve to your family and friends is safe.

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For more information on food safety, go to the DEC website at:
www.dec.state.ak.us/eh/fss/index.htm