



DEC NEWS

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Don't sabotage your summer barbeque advises DEC

June 21, 2005—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 foodborne illness. To prevent food borne illness, practice safe food handling techniques when cooking and eating outdoors. The Department of Environmental Conservation suggests the following tips when preparing, cooking, and storing food.

Before you begin:

- Wash your hands. Food safety begins with hand-washing, even outdoors.
- Keep utensils and platters clean when preparing food.

Grilling food:

- Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter or outdoors. Do not reuse marinade.
- Use a clean platter to serve cooked meats and seafood. Grill partially cooked food immediately.
- Cook food thoroughly using a food thermometer.

Serving food:

- Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot (at or above 140 °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!

Transporting food:

- Keep cold food cold in an ice filled cooler at or below 40°F.
- Pack beverages and perishable food in separate coolers.
- Pack meat, poultry, and seafood while still frozen so they stay colder longer. Keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood securely wrapped and separate to prevent contaminating other foods.
- Rinse raw fruits and vegetables before packing them.
- Keep coolers in air conditioned areas, rather than in a hot trunk.

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

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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