

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact: Katherine Pinto
Nutrition, Food Safety and Health Agent, Wildcat Extension District
kd Pinto@ksu.edu, 620-232-1930

Suns Out, Grills Out!

With spring being here and summer being just around the corner, it's time to take the cover off the grill to prepare for another season of tasty meals! Cooking outdoors was once a summer-only activity shared with family and friends. Fun fact: surveys revealed that more than half of Americans say they are cooking outdoors year-round. So, whether the snow is blowing or the sun is shining, it's important to follow food safety guidelines to prevent harmful bacteria from causing foodborne illness.

Use these simple guidelines for grilling food safely:

- **Separate Raw and Cooked Foods-** To prevent foodborne illness, do not use the same platter, cutting board, or utensils for raw and cooked foods. Harmful bacteria present in raw meat and poultry and their juices can contaminate cooked food.
- **Cook Thoroughly** – Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill tend to brown quickly on the outside, so use a food thermometer to ensure the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature. NEVER partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later.
- **Meats** – Cook all raw beef, pork, lamb, and veal steaks, chops, and roasts to a minimum internal temperature of 145°F (63°C) as measured with a food thermometer. For safety and quality, allow meat to rest for at least 3 minutes before carving or consuming.
- **Poultry-** Poultry should be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F (74°C) as measured with a food thermometer.
- **Keep Cold Foods Cold-** Keep meat and poultry refrigerated until ready to use. Only take out what will immediately be placed on the grill. When using a cooler, keep it out of direct sunlight 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 Hot Foods Hot-** After cooking meat and poultry, keep it hot until served — at 140°F (60°C) 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 (93°C), in a chafing dish, slow cooker, or on a warming tray.

Leftovers & Reheating- Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in shallow containers. Discard any food left out for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature outside is above 90°F/ 32°C). When reheating fully cooked meats like hot dogs or hamburgers, grill to 165°F (74°C) or until steaming hot.

By following these tips, you will keep yourself and your loved ones safe while grilling this season. Happy grilling!

For more information, visit www.usda.gov, OR contact, Katherine Pinto, Nutrition, Food Safety and Health Agent, kd Pinto@ksu.edu or 620-232-1930.

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