

Food Safety Important For Outdoor Cooking As Well As Indoor

(KAIR)--With temperatures starting to climb, many people may be thinking about bringing the grill out from storage and getting it prepared for the grilling season.

However, once that grill is cleaned and ready to go, it's important to remember that cooking outdoors is not that much different from cooking indoors. K-State Research and Extension food scientist Karen Blakeslee says that just a little common sense can go a long way in preventing food mistakes from occurring. She suggests that you thaw your meats before grilling them so it does not take as long for them to cook. She says the best way to do this is to let them thaw in a refrigerator so they stay cold as it is thawing. Also, when you are transferring meat to and from the grill, it is important to keep the raw meat on one platter and the cooked meat on another. This prevents cross contamination.

Blakeslee adds that using a thermometer to check the temperature of your meat can not only prevent it from becoming overcooked and dry, but also ensures that it is cooked enough to prevent any food borne illnesses. She says the ideal temperature for your meat depends on what it is. For ground meats, except for poultry, should be cooked to a temperature of at least 160 degrees. Any kind of poultry should be cooked to at least 165 degrees.

Blakeslee also suggests that if you are doing an entire meal on the grill, you should plan the meal carefully, and place items on the grill according to how long it will take for them to cook. This way, everything can be ready to eat at the same time.

For more grilling and food safety tips, you can visit your local county or district Extension office, or go to ksre.ksu.edu.

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