

Seven Steps to Safe Summer Food

Did you know that foodborne illness peaks during the summer months? Keeping food safe is a challenge. Follow these suggestions to Fight BAC!® (foodborne bacteria) and reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food. Sing Row, Row, Row Your Boat twice to get a sense of how long you should wash.

Marinate food in the refrigerator. Don't use sauce that was used to marinate raw meat or poultry on cooked food. Reserve a portion of the unused marinade to use as a sauce.

When grilling foods, preheat the coals on your grill for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the coals are lightly coated with ash.

Use a food thermometer to ensure that food reaches a safe internal temperature.

Hamburgers should be cooked to 160°F, while large cuts of beef such as roasts and steaks may be cooked to 145°F for medium rare or to 160°F for medium. Poultry must reach a temperature of 165°F.

When taking foods off the grill, do not put cooked food items back on the same plate that held raw food, unless it has been washed with hot water and soap first. And, in hot weather (above 90°F) foods should never sit out for more than one hour before going in the refrigerator.

A full cooler will maintain its cold temperatures longer than one that is partially filled so it is important to pack plenty of extra ice or freezer packs to ensure a constant cold temperature. Keep the cooler out of the direct sun. More food safety information is available at www.fightbac.org