

Top Tips for Grilling Month

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Grilling with family and friends is a classic summertime activity, particularly during the month of July which is designated as National Grilling Month! Keep foodborne illness off the menu by following these tips while grilling:



- **Wash your hands.** You should always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before handling food. This is roughly the same amount of time it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
- **Marinate food in the refrigerator.** Never marinate food on the counter or outside!
- **Avoid cross contamination.** Never use sauce that was used to marinate raw meat on cooked food and do not put cooked food on a plate that was used for raw meat. If you want to use some of the marinade as a sauce on your cooked food, set aside some of the unused marinade ahead of time for that purpose.
- **Keep cold food cold.** If you are transporting food in a cooler, use an insulated cooler and include enough ice or ice packs to keep the temperature at 40°F or below. Place your cooler in the shade or under shelter to keep it out of direct sunlight.
- **Cook food to a safe internal temperature.** Once food is on the grill, be sure to cook it to a safe internal temperature as measured by a food thermometer. Color is not an indicator of food safety! According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), whole cuts of beef and pork (such as steaks, roasts, and chops) should be cooked to 145°F and then allowed to rest for 3 minutes. Hamburgers made of ground beef or pork should be cooked to 160°F. All poultry (including ground poultry) should be cooked to at least 165°F.
- **Keep hot food hot.** Once you have grilled meat or poultry, keep it hot (at 140°F or above) until you serve it. This can be done by setting it to the side of the grill rack.
- **Keep food safe.** Do not let raw meat or poultry, cooked food, or cut fresh vegetables and fruits sit out at room temperature for more than two hours before placing them in a refrigerator or freezer. (If the temperature is above 90°F, this timeframe decreases to one hour.)

For more information from the Partnership for Food Safety Education, visit <https://www.fightbac.org/grill-master/>. You can also find information from the USDA at bit.ly/grillsafely. Contact me with questions at clarawicoff@ksu.edu or 620-365-2242.