



NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Provides Summer Food Safety Tips

BISMARCK, N.D. – The upcoming Fourth of July holiday is a great time to remind North Dakotans that proper food handling and preparation can help you prevent foodborne illness this summer, according to Sarah Weninger, foodborne surveillance epidemiologist with the North Dakota Department of Health.

As always, key recommendations for all food handling include washing hands and surfaces often and using a food thermometer to make sure meat and poultry are cooked safely and to the correct temperature.

“With the Fourth of July soon here, the North Dakota Department of Health would like to offer a few tips to help keep friends and family safe from foodborne illness,” Weninger said. “Holiday weekends are a time when many people enjoy barbecues, picnics or dinners around a campfire. Following these few tips will help keep your Fourth of July weekend and your whole summer safe and enjoyable.”

- **MARINADE DONE RIGHT**

Sauces and marinades used on raw meat or poultry should never be reused on cooked foods. Bacteria from the raw meat can grow in the reused marinade and make people sick. Prepare a fresh batch of marinade for use as a dipping sauce or for basting cooked foods. Always allow meat and poultry to marinate in the refrigerator. At room temperature, bacteria on raw meat and poultry can double in number every 20 minutes. Likewise, thaw meat and poultry in the refrigerator, never on the counter.

- **CHILL OUT**

Bacteria can grow and multiply in food that is not properly chilled. Sliced fruits and vegetables, cold salads with or without eggs, and meat should not be kept at room temperature for more than two hours. Meals served outside in temperatures higher than 90

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degrees F should not be left out for more than one hour. During summer picnics, it is important to pack a refrigerator thermometer in your ice cooler to ensure the food in the cooler is kept at 40 degrees F or below.

- **KEEP IT HOT, HOT, HOT!**

Cooked foods left out at room temperature may become unsafe within two hours. In temperatures higher than 90 degrees F, food may become unsafe in just one hour. Food that has been cooked and left sitting on the table for several hours should not be eaten. Hot foods need to be kept hot. Use the grill and warming trays to keep food warm while serving.

- **IF IT COMES FROM THE GROUND, SCRUB IT DOWN**

Wash all fruits and vegetables before eating. Scrub fruits with rinds, such as watermelon and cantaloupe, with clean water and a food brush before slicing. Bacteria can transfer from the knife on the outside of the fruit and contaminate the flesh of the fruit. Use clean knives and cutting boards.

- **TWO IS BETTER THAN ONE**

A common mistake backyard chefs make is serving cooked food on the same plate that was used to transport the raw meat or poultry from the kitchen to the grill. People often use the same spatula or kitchen tongs to remove fully cooked food from the grill as was used to place raw food on the grill. Cross-contamination also can occur when vegetables or other uncooked foods come into contact with cutting boards, plates and utensils that were used for raw meat and poultry products. Keep it safe by using two instead of one – one for raw foods and one for cooked foods.

For more information about food safety or to report a possible foodborne illness, contact Sarah Weninger, North Dakota Department of Health, at 800.472.2180

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