

Grilling Tips For “Clean” Cuisine

Summer is the traditional “grilling season,” but nearly half of all Americans fire up the barbecue all year round! Whether you’re a weekend-only griller or an every day grill gourmet, beef up your food safety with these helpful, hot-off-the-grill tips from homefoodsafety.org:

Wash hands with warm soapy water before/during food preparation.

Proper hand washing may eliminate nearly half of all cases of foodborne illness. Since bacteria can easily be transferred from the body to foods and surfaces, always wash your hands thoroughly, especially after switching tasks such as handling raw meats and then touching vegetables.

Wash plates between uses or use separate plates: one for holding raw meat, poultry and seafood; and another for cooked foods.

The juices from raw meats and poultry aren’t always easy to contain. They tend to spill over and/or leak on foods and surfaces. Because these juices may carry harmful bacteria, using two separate plates will help prevent cross-contamination, a leading cause of foodborne illness.

Clean grilling utensils with hot soapy water.

After using knives, grilling tongs or forks to touch raw meats and poultry, clean thoroughly with hot soapy water before handling cooked foods to prevent cross-contamination. Too much hassle to clean the dishes while you’re cooking? Use two sets of utensils at the grill: one for raw meats and the other for cooked foods.

Scrub the grill with hot soapy water before cooking.

Make sure your grill is clean by scrubbing it with hot, soapy water before each and every use. Put a little elbow grease into cleaning the grill to kill any bacteria that may be lingering about.

Use a meat thermometer to check the doneness of meats and poultry.

Relying on color alone to check the doneness of meat isn’t the best technique. A meat thermometer is the only way to ensure food has been cooked to the proper temperature.

USDA Recommended Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures:

- ✓ Steak and Fish at least 145°F
- ✓ Hamburgers, Pork and game animals at least 160°F
- ✓ Chicken and Turkey at least 165°F.

Let Leftovers Go

Keeping grilled foods for too long in the refrigerator can affect both taste and quality. Make sure your grilled leftovers are as safe as they are delicious by refrigerating foods in shallow containers (no more than 3 inches deep) and writing the date on top to help you keep track. Keep leftovers in the refrigerator for only three to four days. Reheat to an internal temperature of 165° F before serving a second time – use a meat thermometer to check temperature.

Websites to visit:

Home Food Safety at www.homefoodsafety.org, www.grillingtips.com and www.fsis.usda.gov/Is_It_Done_Yet/Brochure_Text/

If you have questions about the lunch program, you can e-mail me at jhiler@jdsd117.org or call me at JHS 217-243-4384, ext 2277. The lunch menus are also on WLDS and Channel 17.

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