

Food Safety

HELPFUL HINTS FROM EXPERTS

Hot Tips For Cookouts And Marinating

(NAPSA)—Here's food for thought: Putting safety first may mean your next cookout can be one with fun that lasts.

To help, the experts at the United States Department of Agriculture offer these tips:

- **When shopping**, buy cold food such as meat and poultry last, right before checkout. Always refrigerate perishable food within two hours. Refrigerate within one hour when the temperature is above 90° F.

- **Thaw safely**. Completely thaw meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks more evenly. Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing. You can thaw sealed packages cold water or defrost in the microwave if the food will be placed immediately on the grill.

- **Marinating**. A marinade is a savory, acidic sauce in which a food is soaked to enrich its flavor or to tenderize. Marinating can make tougher cuts of meat, such as chuck steak, flank steak or top round, tender.

Poultry and cubed meat or stew meat can be marinated up to two days. Beef, veal, pork and lamb roasts, chops and steaks may be marinated up to five days. If some of the marinade is to be used as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion of the marinade before putting raw meat and poultry in it. If the marinade used on raw meat or poultry is to be reused as a sauce, let it come to a boil first to destroy any harmful bacteria.

- **Transporting**. When carrying food to another spot, use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40° F or below. Pack food right from



If you're eating away from home, find out if there's clean water. If not, bring water or pack clean cloths and wet towelettes for cleaning surfaces and hands.

the refrigerator into the cooler immediately before leaving home.

- **Keep cold food cold**. Keep meat and poultry in the refrigerator or cooler until ready to use. Take out only the meat and poultry that will immediately be placed on the grill.

Keep the cooler in the shade or shelter. Avoid opening the lid too often.

Pack beverages in one cooler and perishables in a separate cooler.

- **Keep everything clean**. Be sure there are plenty of clean utensils and platters. Don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry.

Learn More

For food safety information about meat, poultry or egg products, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at (888) MPHOTline, or (888) 674-6854; type a question into "Ask Karen" at www.AskKaren.gov; go to www.fsis.usda.gov; or visit www.befoodsafe.gov.