

Simple Guidelines For Safer Grilling

(NAPSA)—Cooking outdoors is in at any time of year. When you grill, it's important to follow the guidelines from the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying and causing food poisoning:

- When shopping, buy cold food such as meat and poultry last, right before checkout. Separate raw meat and poultry from other food in your shopping cart and put packages of raw meat and poultry into plastic bags.

- Plan to go home right from the store. Consider taking a cooler with ice for perishables. Always refrigerate perishable food within two hours—within one hour when the temperature is above 90° F.

- At home, place meat and poultry in the refrigerator immediately. Freeze poultry and ground meat that won't be used in a day or two.

- Completely thaw meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks evenly. Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing. For quicker thawing, you can defrost in the microwave or in cold water if the food will be placed immediately on the grill.

- A marinade is a savory, acidic sauce in which a food is soaked to enrich its flavor or to tenderize it. Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. 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 before putting raw meat and poultry in it. However, if the marinade used on raw meat or poultry is to be reused, make sure to let it come to a boil first to destroy any harmful bacteria.

- When transporting food, keep it cold. Use an insulated cooler



Keep hot food hot and cold food cold to enjoy cooking outdoors.

with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40° F or below. Pack it immediately before leaving home. Keep it cold until ready to use.

- Always wash hands with soap and water before handling food. Use hand sanitizer or moist towelettes if soap and water are not available.

- Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often brown very fast on the outside. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature.

- After cooking meat and poultry on the grill, keep it hot until served—at 140° F or warmer. Keep cooked meats on the side of the grill rack. At home, cooked meat can be kept hot in an oven set at approximately 200° F, in a chafing dish or slow cooker or on a warming tray.

- Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in shallow containers. Discard any food left out more than two hours.

- Learn more at www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/barbecue_food_safety/index.asp.

For more information, visit www.fsis.usda.gov or ask a food safety question anytime at www.AskKaren.gov or via smartphone at m.askkaren.gov or call 1-888-MPHOTLINE.