

# Healthy

# Outdoor Dining

Hot weather ushers in cookouts, picnics and barbecues. To help residents avoid illnesses that can spoil their summer fun, Tarrant County Public Health offers these simple reminders and precautions for outdoor cooking and dining:

## Preparing and precooking

Many foods can be prepared beforehand in the kitchen where you have more control. Start with clean utensils and cutting boards. Wash hands thoroughly with hot soapy water before cooking or handling raw foods and before handling cooked foods.



Cross-contamination is a preventable food safety problem, and washing up between different stages of the food preparation process helps prevent cross-contamination.

When cooking outside and no running water nearby, use an antibacterial hand cleanser. Also, wipe surfaces off with a heavy-duty paper towel. Cloth towels may help germs breed and multiply.

## Chilling



Insulated coolers with ice or ice packs are good for transporting raw or cooked foods. If using another type of container, line it with a plastic bag and add some ice to help retain the cool temperature.

Be sure to keep coolers and all foods out of direct sunlight while traveling. Don't leave foods in car trunks because the heat can raise the temperature of foods to well over 100 degrees.

## Serving

Never put raw and cooked foods of any kind together — or even on the same plates.

When using a marinade, be careful to keep the leftover marinade — and the brush — from spreading bacteria it may have absorbed from the raw meat onto the cooked meat.



## Wrapping

Use plastic sealable containers or zippered plastic bags to separate foods and securely seal them.

Avoid using anything that might leak or break and contaminate other foods.



## Grilling

Make sure the grill is ready before beginning. Readiness times vary for electric, gas and charcoal grills. No matter what type of grill, make sure that all meats are cooked thoroughly.

Use a meat thermometer to be sure. Ground beef should be cooked to 160 degrees, steaks and roasts to 150, poultry to 180.



## Keeping it cool

Repackage and place leftovers back in the cooler.

Refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible, doing so no more than one hour after cooking, especially when it's warm outside.

