

Lorain County General Health District

Food Safety



"For The Health of Us All"

Foodborne illness, also known as "*food poisoning*", is more prevalent in warm weather months because more people are cooking outside at picnics, barbecues, and on camping trips. The safety controls that a kitchen provides such as thermostat-controlled cooking, refrigeration, and washing facilities are usually not available.

Given the right circumstances, harmful bacteria can quickly multiply on food to large numbers. When this happens, someone eating the food can get sick.

Follow these **four simple steps to safer food**:

CLEAN: Wash Hands and Surfaces Often

Unwashed hands are a prime cause of foodborne illness.

- Wash hands in hot, soapy water before and after handling food, after using the restroom, handling pets, and changing diapers.
- When eating away from the home, find out if there's a source of clean water or bring water for preparation and cleaning. Pack clean, wet, disposable washcloths or moist towelettes and paper towels for cleaning hands and surfaces.

SEPARATE: Don't Cross-contaminate

Cross-contamination during preparation, grilling, and serving food is a prime cause of foodborne illness.

- When packing the cooler chest, wrap raw meats securely;

What To Do With Leftovers?

- Food left out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours may not be safe to eat.
- Above 90°F, food should not be left out over 1 hour.
- Put leftover perishables back on ice as soon as you finish eating.

IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS, THROW IT OUT!

Food Safety Inspection Service-<http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

avoid raw meat juices from coming in contact with ready-to-eat food.

- Wash plates, utensils, and cutting boards that held raw meat/poultry before using again for cooked food.

CHILL: Refrigerate Promptly

Holding food at an unsafe temperature is a prime cause of foodborne illness. Keep cold food cold!

- Always keep meats and dairy products refrigerated or on ice in an insulated cooler.
- Preserve the cold temperature of the cooler by replenishing ice as soon as it starts to melt.
- Keep the cooler in the shade/shelter as much as possible.

COOK: Cook to Proper Temperatures

Food safety experts agree that food is properly cooked when it is heated for a long enough time and at high enough temperatures to kill harmful bacteria.

- Check food with a thermometer; even if it looks cooked on the outside.
- Cook hamburgers/ground meats to an internal temperature of 160°F.
- Cook steaks/roasts that have been tenderized, boned, or rolled to an internal temperature of 160-180°F.
- Cook meat/poultry completely at picnic site—partial cooking ahead of time allows bacteria to survive and multiply—subsequent cooking may not destroy them.

USDA Hotline

For additional information about meat, poultry, or egg products, call the toll-free USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline at 1.800.535.4555.

The Hotline is staffed by food safety experts, weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Food safety recordings can be heard 24 hours a day using a touch-tone phone.