

Date June 18, 2019
Contact: Jessica Kelly, MPH, CHES
jkelly@livingstonnj.org
973-535-7961 ext. 227

Food Safety Tips for the Summer



Now that warmer weather has arrived, many of us will be enjoying some summer cookouts with friends and family. However, along with those cookouts comes an increased risk of foodborne illnesses, which tend to be more common during the summer months. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1 in 6 Americans will suffer from a foodborne illness each year.

When planning for an outdoor meal – such as a picnic – or when camping, there may be no refrigerator or running tap water to use when preparing meals. The Livingston Health Department shares some tips that will help you keep the food you are preparing this summer safe.

- When planning to cook and eat in an area outdoors such as a campsite, first find out if there is a source of safe drinking water. If not, bring your own water for preparing meals and cleaning.
- When using a cooler to keep food cold, make sure it is well packed with ice and/or frozen gel packs. Keep the cooler in a shady area and keep it closed as much as possible to keep the food cold. If people will be opening the cooler often to remove drinks, put those in a separate cooled container. Add more ice to the cooler when it starts to melt, and replace gel packs when they get warm.
- Fill your cooler with as much cold food as possible, because a full cooler will stay cool longer. Frozen meat, poultry, and shellfish may be packed in the cooler and will stay cold longer. Fill any remaining space in the cooler with ice.
- Use separate utensils and cutting boards or platters for raw meat versus ready-to-eat foods. Use clean utensils and plates for serving cooked meat; never reuse items that touched raw meat or poultry.

- Wash your hands thoroughly when preparing food and especially after touching raw meat or poultry. If there is no soap and water, you may instead use moist towelettes to clean your hands. Wash all produce under running tap water before preparing or eating; if the cooking site will not have running water, make sure to wash your produce in advance. Clean the utensils, grill, and food preparation area both before and after cooking.
- When marinating any raw meat, marinate the meat in a sealed container in the refrigerator. If you need extra marinade as a sauce, put some aside before using it on raw meat; if it has been used on raw meat, boil any leftover marinade you plan to use.
- Use a meat thermometer to make sure all meat, fish, and poultry are cooked thoroughly to their minimum temperatures. Beef, pork, lamb, fish, and veal should be cooked to 145°F, ground meats should be cooked to 160°F, and poultry – including ground poultry – should be cooked to 165°F.
- When serving food, make sure that any perishable items do not stay out for more than two hours. If you are having food outdoors and the temperature is about 90°F or higher, do not leave food out for over an hour.