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## Tips for a food-safe holiday cookout

Memorial Day is the traditional start of the summer season, and what better way to start the summer than to celebrate the holiday with a barbeque?

Of course, you could inadvertently invite some unwanted guests to your cookout, such as harmful bacteria that can make you and your family sick. That's why the Kane County Health Department wants to remind everyone of a few food safety tips to keep in mind when grilling this summer.

### Keep Everything Clean

Be sure there are plenty of clean utensils and platters. To prevent foodborne illness, don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry. Bacteria present in raw meat and poultry and their juices can contaminate safely cooked food.

### Cook Thoroughly

Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside. Always use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature. Remember the saying: "It's safe to bite when the temperature is right."

- Whole poultry: 165 °F
- Poultry pieces: 165 °F
- Ground poultry: 165 °F
- Ground meats: 160 °F
- Beef, pork, lamb, and veal (steaks, roasts and chops): 145 °F and allow to rest at least 3 minutes.

### Reheating

When reheating fully cooked meats like hot dogs, grill to 165 °F or until steaming hot.

### Keep Hot Food Hot

After cooking meat and poultry on the grill, keep it hot until served -- at 140 °F or warmer.

Keep cooked meats hot by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals where they could overcook. At home, the 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.

### Leftovers

Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in shallow containers. Discard any food left out more than 2 hours (1 hour if temperatures are above 90 °F).

Following these few guidelines will go a long way to making sure your barbecues will be food-safe all summer long. More information about food safety is available by visiting the Health Department's website at

[kanehealth.com/food\\_safety.htm](http://kanehealth.com/food_safety.htm). You can also follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/kanehealth](http://www.facebook.com/kanehealth) and Twitter @KaneCoHealth.