

## Clippings



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A Weekly Column from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

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**For Immediate Release**

### Easy Summer Food Safety

*Renee Sweers, Human Sciences, Nutrition and Wellness*

Picnic season is here! Keeping picnic food safe is as easy as four simple concepts: clean, separate, cook and chill. Think about these for your next summer picnic:



#### **Clean**

Will there be handwashing at the picnic site? Bring soap and paper towels if running water will be available. If no water is available, bring a water jug with a spigot. Handwashing after using the restroom and before handling food is essential for picnic food safety.

#### **Separate**

Keep raw meats wrapped in the cooler so that meat juices do not contaminate ready to eat foods. What are ready to eat foods? Any food that is ready to pop in your

mouth and eat! Potato salad, fried chicken, fresh fruits, raw vegetables, deli meats and cheese for cold sandwiched, even cookies and desserts are ready to eat foods. They will not be cooked again so there is no 'kill step' if they are contaminated with bacteria. Don't forget to keep raw meat and cooked meat separate, don't put the grilled meat on the same plate that you took the raw meat off of.

## **Cook**

If you are cooking meat on a grill at the picnic, make a plan for being sure the meat is cooked to the proper temperatures. Here are some things to consider:

- Is the meat thawed or frozen? Cooking meat that is already thawed helps to be sure cooking temperatures are reached.
- Do you know the cooking temperatures for the meats you are cooking? All poultry should be cooked to at least 165°. Ground beef and pork should be cooked to 160°F. Steaks, chops and fish should be cooked to at least 145°F.
- Consider bringing a thermometer to check that meat has been cooked adequately.

## **Chill**

Keeping food cold at a picnic can be a challenge. Plan ahead so that cold food is fully chilled before you pack it in your cooler. Use plenty of ice and ice packs. Don't put the cooler in a hot car trunk and keep it in a cool shady spot at the picnic site. Cold food should only be out of the cooler for one hour on a hot summer day. Only put out what you think will be eaten, and then you won't feel bad about discarding what was sitting out for an hour.

For food safety questions email [answer@iastate.edu](mailto:answer@iastate.edu) call toll-free the ISU Extension and Outreach Answerline, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - noon and 1 - 4 p.m.

- 1-800-262-3804 FREE (in Iowa)
- 1-800-854-1678 FREE (in Minnesota)
- 1-888-393-6336 FREE (in South Dakota)
- 1-800-735-2942 FREE (Relay Iowa phone linkage for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals)

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