



ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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"PROMOTING & PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF ONEIDA COUNTY"

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Food Safety for Summer

In the month of June, we generally think of the end of school, graduations and the beginning of summer. What better way to celebrate than to have a cookout or a picnic? We welcome the beautiful, sunny, summer days, but there can be challenges when cooking/storing food outdoors.

Bacteria can multiply faster at higher temperatures which can result in unpleasant and sometimes dangerous illnesses. There are things we can all do to help prevent foodborne illnesses. Both Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) recommend four steps to safe food: clean, separate, cook and chill.

Clean: Wash your hands. Wash your hands if you are preparing/cooking the food. Wash your hands before you eat. It's a simple task, but one that is so extremely important in helping keep us all healthy. Make sure the utensils, dishes and cooking surfaces are also kept clean.

Separate: Raw meat should always be kept separate from other foods, both when storing and preparing. Improper handling of raw meat, seafood and eggs could cause contamination of utensils and preparation surfaces as well as other food.

Cook: Make sure to cook all meats to their recommended temperatures. Poultry needs to be cooked to 165 degrees, whereas fish and whole cuts of beef need to be 145 degrees. For more specific information, visit <https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/safe-minimum-internal-temperatures>. Using a food thermometer is the best way to know if you're cooking your food to a safe temperature.

Chill: Keep your warm food warm and keep your cold food cold. Know the safe temperatures and how to properly store the food. In hot weather, cold food should be refrigerated after being out for up to two hours and only one hour if the air temperature is 90 degrees or warmer. Salads and meat generally should not be stored in the refrigerator for more than a few days before throwing it out. For more specific information, a cold food storage chart can be found at <https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/cold-food-storage-charts>.

Food-borne illness can be serious and sometimes life-threatening. Symptoms sometimes include vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramps. These illnesses are preventable if you take the necessary safety steps. To learn more about food safety, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/> and <https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/handling-food-safely-while-eating-outdoors>.

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