

Summer Food Safety Grilling

Summer brings on the craving to grill!

Safe food handling is always important—but grilling can bring special challenges.



Test Your Grilling Knowledge!

Safe or Unsafe

1. Is it safe or unsafe to marinate meat and poultry on the kitchen counter?

Bacteria grows rapidly at room temperature making it **unsafe** to marinate meat and poultry on the kitchen counter. The safest way to marinate meat or poultry is in a tightly sealed container in the refrigerator, or in an iced cooler if you are transporting food. To be safe in the refrigerator or cooler, the temperature should be kept at 40°F or colder. This can be determined by using a refrigerator freezer thermometer.

2. Is it safe or unsafe to partially cook meat or poultry and later finish cooking it on the grill?

This is **unsafe**. You may have heard the saying that a half-baked idea is not a good idea. Well, this holds true for cooking too. Interrupted cooking is really risky business. If you must cook ahead, cook the food completely, cool it fast in the refrigerator in shallow containers and reheat it later on the grill.

3. Is it safe or unsafe to use the same platter for raw and grilled meat or poultry?

This is **unsafe**. Juices from raw meat and poultry are high in bacteria. The plate used to transport raw meat or poultry to the grill shouldn't be used again because the raw juices could contaminate the finished cooked product. Always place cooked grilled meat and poultry on a clean plate or platter.

4. Is it safe or unsafe to determine the doneness of grilled burgers by internal color?

This is **unsafe**. Recent USDA research studies indicate that some ground beef may turn brown prematurely before a safe internal temperature of 160°F is reached. The only safe way to determine doneness of grilled food is to use a food thermometer. Thermometers are easy to use and take the guesswork out of grilling. For burgers, the thin bimetallic stem thermometer works well when inserted sideways into the burger. Remember to clean the thermometer with hot soapy water, rinse and air dry, after each use to avoid cross contamination or transfer of bacteria.

5. Is it safe or unsafe to eat grilled food in moderation?

Even though grilled food has been linked to an increase in cancer risk, the America Cancer Society states if eaten in moderation, grilled foods are **safe**. The cancer concern is the charring of food. To reduce charring, before grilling trim-off excess visible fat. During grilling avoid flare-ups by cooking farther from the coals or by placing meat and poultry on aluminum foil to form a protective barrier from the flames.

SAFE INTERNAL MINIMUM TEMPERATURES

Whole Poultry	165°F	Beef, veal and lamb	
Poultry Breasts	165°F	(steaks, roasts and chops)	
Ground Poultry	165°F	Medium rare	145°F
Hamburgers	160°F	Medium	160°F
All cuts of Pork	160°F		

Questions?

Contact the AnswerLine at 1-800-854-1678

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