



Summer Food Safety

Food Safety Rules

In the previous issue we began our discussion about summer food safety. Following the basic food safety rules will reduce the risk of food borne illness. The four basic rules of food safety are Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill. In the previous issue we talked about Clean and Separate. In this issue we are going to talk about Cook and Chill.

Cook

Food safety experts agree that foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time – and at a high enough temperature – to kill harmful bacteria that can cause foodborne illness. These temperatures and times vary depending on the type of food.

A food thermometer is the best way to know for sure that the food has cooked to the recommended temperature. The instant-read thermometer is an easy to use safe thermometer. It is not designed to stay in the food during cooking, but is used when you think the food is done. Just insert the thermometer into the thickest part of the food for 15 to 20 seconds and the dial will show the internal temperature. These thermometers are inexpensive and are available at stores that carry kitchen supplies.

Cooking Temperatures

We are most concerned that animal products are cooked to the correct temperature to prevent foodborne illness. Here are a few foods and the recommended temperature.



- Cook roasts and steaks to at least 160°F
- Cook chicken and turkey to 165°F
- Cook ground beef to at least 160°F.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. Don't use recipes in which the eggs remain raw or only partially cooked.
- Fish should be opaque and flake easily with a fork.

Once the foods are cooked, serve immediately to prevent bacteria from growing as the food cools.

When cooking in a microwave oven, cover food, stir and rotate for even cooking.

If you reheat food, leftovers should be heated to 165°F. Bring all sauces, soups and gravies to a rolling boil to make sure all harmful bacterial are killed.

Chill

Chilling foods properly is just as important as cooking them safely. Germs grow fast between 40° and 140°F – referred to as the **Danger Zone**. You can slow or prevent germs from growing on the food by refrigerating quickly.

Check the temperature of your refrigerator, it should be at 40°F or below.

Remember:

- Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods and leftovers within 2 hours. If the temperature is 90°F or above they should be refrigerated within one hour.
- Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave if it will be cooked immediately.
- Separate large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.

Traveling with Food

Remember when you bring food home from the grocery store or leftovers home from a restaurant it must be refrigerated within 2 hours of purchase or serving. Any perishable food left at room temperature for longer than 2 hours should be thrown away.

Be sure to follow these four rules – Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill to have a safe and healthy summer.

Chicken – Pasta with Vegetables

4 ounces uncooked pasta
1 cup broccoli, chopped
½ cup ¼-inch strips- carrot
1 teaspoon vegetable oil
2 skinless boneless chicken breast halves, cut into ½-inch strips
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
1/3 cup fat-free ranch dressing
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon shredded fresh or 1/8 teaspoon dried basil leaves

Cook and drain the pasta as directed on package – except add broccoli and carrot 1 minute before pasta is done. Sauté chicken and garlic in oil over medium-high heat 2 to 3 minutes until chicken is no longer pink in center; remove from heat. Stir in dressing, cheese and basil. Toss with pasta and vegetables. Serves 2.

Nutrition information: 405 calories, 12 g fat, 100 mg cholesterol, 560 mg sodium, 8 g carbohydrate, 5 g fiber.



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION
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