



## Don't Get Ill When You Grill

Barbecues and picnics are some of the favorite ways we enjoy summer, but it's important to take some precautions before you light up the grill. The Nebraska Regional Poison Center and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Department of Nutrition and Health Sciences would like to share some tips to keep everyone safe from food borne illnesses that are so common this time of year.

### Transporting Food:

- Keep the food in a cooler and place it in the car instead of the hot trunk. When you get to your destination keep your cooler in the shade and replace the ice as needed.
- If you cook food ahead of time, chill thoroughly before putting it in the cooler. If you take hot food, wrap the dish in aluminum foil and towels to keep it above 140°F. Avoid taking a hot dish on a long trip.

### Getting the Grill Started:

- Never use gasoline or kerosene to light a charcoal fire. Both can cause an explosion.
- Never add lighter fluid directly to hot coals to get a sluggish fire going. The flame could travel up the stream of fluid and burn you.
- Keep lighter fluid up and out of reach of small children as this product is dangerous if swallowed.

### Grilling:

- Make sure you have washed your hands well before handling the food.
- Only take out the food from the cooler that you are going to grill immediately.
- Never place cooked meat on an unwashed platter which held raw meat.

### While Cooking:

- The USDA recommends fully cooking all meats to ensure bacteria are destroyed. Meats should be cooked to 160 degrees. Always use a food thermometer as you can't tell if meat is fully cooked by looking at it. For more tips please visit [www.IsItDoneYet.gov](http://www.IsItDoneYet.gov)
- Cook ground poultry to 165 degrees and whole poultry parts to 180 degrees.
- Reheat pre-cooked meats until steaming hot.
- Never reuse marinades that have come in contact with raw meat, chicken or fish and don't put the cooked food back into an unwashed container or the dish that contained the marinade.

If you feel you have symptoms of food poisoning or have any questions you can contact the Poison Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222. The Nebraska Regional Poison Center is sponsored by the Nebraska Medical Center, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. For more information about food safety, please contact your local county Extension office; or Julie Albrecht, Ph.D., R.D., 402-472-8884, [jalbrecht1@unl.edu](mailto:jalbrecht1@unl.edu)