

# Dining Outside

at the Annual Picnic or Barbecue

FOOD PROTECTION CONNECTION



BE CAREFUL OF UNINVITED GUESTS. UNSEEN BACTERIA MAY BE LURKING AROUND YOUR PICNIC FARE.

What better way to spend a lovely spring or summer day than outside on the grounds or patio of your facility with a beautiful blue sky, family or friends, great food, and refreshing drinks. But be careful of the uninvited guests. Not so much the flies and ants, but the unseen bacteria that may be lurking around your picnic fare. Unattended picnic or barbecue foods that are perishable (potentially hazardous foods) sitting out on a warm day will rapidly develop elevated levels of bacteria that can make your partygoers very ill.

Illness resulting from foodborne pathogens may be mild to severe and could include symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, headache, and similar. It could

take from 30 minutes up to several days following the consumption of contaminated food for symptoms to begin to present. Foodborne illness will be most severe in children, elderly, pregnant women, or anyone who is immunocompromised. These groups of people are known as Highly Susceptible Populations (HSPs). In most institutional settings such as hospitals, day care centers, nursing homes, long-term care facilities and similar, you will be dealing with these high-risk populations. With some very simple steps, you'll be more confident that the foods you are serving at your next picnic or barbecue are safe for everyone at your facility to enjoy.



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## KEEP COLD FOODS COLD

Keeping cold foods that way is sometimes easier said than done. On a sizzling summer day, how can you keep the cold food that you're bringing outside the proper temperature? **Cold foods should be kept at 41°F or below.** Foods should never remain in the temperature danger zone (41°F – 135°F) for more than four hours. **After four hours, discard.**

- Start with placing your picnic tables in the shade or under a tarp/tent. This will bring the temperature that is beating down from the sun onto your food down by at least 10°F.
- Place the bowl of food to be served inside a larger bowl that is filled with ice. Your ice will need to be monitored and refilled as it melts. Here's a tip: use a plastic or inflatable baby pool as your ice table. Fill it with ice and lay your TCS (time/temperature controlled for safety) food containers in the ice.
- For larger parties, prepare several smaller trays/bowls of the same item. Try to only serve what can be consumed in one hour. For instance, instead of having one large fruit tray, make three or four smaller fruit trays. Keep the extras in your refrigerator (if available) or coolers. As each tray is consumed, replace it with a fresh tray. This practice creates more work for staff, but it helps ensure that cold food stays cold.
- For foods stored in coolers, ice packs may be insufficient on a very hot summer day. Consider using a combination of ice packs and ice. Keep your ice in baggies that zip tight and your food will not get wet and soggy. If you have a dark colored cooler, place it under a table or cover it with a light colored cloth. Dark colors absorb more heat and will melt your ice inside much faster.
- Check your food often. If foods are beginning to warm and have been out of refrigeration/coolers for more than two hours, place them back in the refrigerator/coolers for a while to cool them back down.
- Consider limiting the food serving time of your picnic to a two-hour window. Inform your guests that food will be served from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm only, for example.

## AVOID CROSS CONTAMINATION

If you will be handling raw meat products at your summer feast, **separate your raw and ready-to-eat foods.**

- Properly thaw meat. Plan ahead and thaw it in the refrigerator two days in advance of your picnic. Your meat should be fully thawed before cooking. Partially thawed meats are very hard to grill properly to assure a fully cooked final product.
- Keep raw meat cold, below 41°F, until you are ready to grill or cook it.
- Consider precooking your meat ahead of time. Chicken and pork (ribs) can be broiled or boiled and then cooled a day or two in advance. Not only will you not have to deal with cross-contamination at your picnic, you will also cut down on your grilling time.
- Have separate platters for raw and ready-to-eat meats. Consider using disposable trays or aluminum pans for your raw products. This will allow you to simply throw them away when empty, avoiding cleaning of dishes and cross-contamination at the same time.

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**Melissa Vaccaro will deliver an education session** on 'Survey Readiness and Risk Factors' on June 7 at ANFP's Annual Conference & Expo in Las Vegas. Learn more at [www.ANFPonline.org/ACE17](http://www.ANFPonline.org/ACE17)

- Keep raw animal products in separate coolers from ready-to-eat foods. You may think your baggies or plastic bowls won't leak, but they will.
- Provide serving utensils for all of your food dishes. Do not allow your guests to serve themselves with their own forks and spoons. No double dipping at this table!
- For picnics away from the property, pack all your clean dishes, utensils, and such in a plastic bin just for clean items. Mark your bins "Clean Dishes Only."
- Likewise, bring plastic tubs with lids to place all dirty dishes in. This will assure they don't get mixed up with the clean dishes. Mark the bins "Dirty Dishes Only."

Table 1: Safe Food Temperature Chart

FOOD	TEMPERATURE
Steaks and roasts	145° F
Fish	145° F
Pork	145° F
Ground beef or any ground meat	155° F
Egg dishes	155° F
Poultry of any kind	165° F
Any stuffed meats or foods and casseroles	165° F
Shrimp, lobster, and crabs	145° F (opaque)
Clams, oysters, and mussels	145° F (Shell will open. Do not eat if shell does not open.)

Source: [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

### COOK FOODS THOROUGHLY

All raw foods have bacteria on them. Some raw foods may even have pathogenic bacteria on them that could make guests very ill, especially HSPs. For this reason you must be vigilant to **cook all foods to their proper temperatures**. This will assure that any pathogens present on your foods are reduced to the point where they can no longer make you sick. You cannot be sure if food is cooked unless you take its temperature. Look, color, and touch are not reliable methods for determining doneness. Take the temperature in the thickest and most central part of the food without touching any bones. Review the Safe Food

Temperature Chart provided here (2013 FDA Food Code cooking temperatures).

### KEEP HOT FOODS HOT

Believe it or not, the 95°F heat from the sun will not be enough to keep your hot foods safe from pathogen growth. **Hot foods should be kept at 135°F.** If you have electricity available, keep hot foods in warmers such as crock pots. No electricity? Still no excuse. In most grocery stores and restaurant supply stores you can find disposable chafing pans that work with a heat source such as Sterno fuel. A few extra dollars? Yes, but happier and healthier guests.

### MAKE HANDWASHING A PRIORITY

**Wash your hands.** Not only should food handlers wash their hands routinely, allow your guests to wash their hands as well. Keep soap and paper towels available at any bathroom or port-o-potty. When picnicking outside, toss some hand wipes and hand sanitizer into your supply bin. Use a hand wipe to get rid of the grime on your hands. Follow up with hand sanitizer to finish off the dirt you cannot see. You can alternately set up a portable hand sink using

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### FULLY THAW YOUR MEAT BEFORE COOKING.

Partially thawed meats are very hard to grill properly to assure a fully cooked final product.

water vessels with on/off faucets and a catch basin.

### ENSURE CLEAN SURFACES

You are eating outside. Did you bring the tables and grill or were they provided for you? Even outdoors, your tables and

food equipment need to be clean.

- **The grill:** Scrape the grill to make it free from the prior grilling drips, spills, and soot. Once it is scraped free of the large dirt, fire up the heat. Allow the grill grates to heat fully before you place your food on them. Not only will it help your food from sticking to the grill, it will also allow any unseen bacteria that may have been growing on the grill to be cooked to destruction.

gallon of cool water. This will be effective enough to reduce pathogens and remain food safe should it come in contact with food or food contact surfaces.

### DETER BUGS

Bugs are the other uninvited guests at an outdoor picnic. Unfortunately, you'll need to deal with those pesky creatures. Bugs spread germs. Take a guess where they were feeding last? Do you really want them walking on your picnic fare? Consider using vanilla candles, citronella, and other non-toxic means to keep bugs from dining with you. Keep covers over your foods as this will help prevent pests from landing directly on your foods.

### PUT FOOD SAFETY ON THE FRONT BURNER

The next time you begin planning your facility's annual picnic or barbecue, take the time to consider food safety. Plan ahead and have your toolbox of food safety equipment, supplies, and knowledge ready. Don't let those pesky unseen germs be the uninvited guests at your next outdoor event. Leave your guests with fond memories along with happy and healthy bellies! **E**

- **Tablecloths/tables:** Wipe down tables. If outdoors, cover picnic tables with cleanable or disposable tablecloths if they cannot be wiped down with a cleaner/sanitizer. Keep in mind how many animals, bugs, and birds may have visited that table recently.
- **Spray sanitizer:** Include a small bottle of spray sanitizer in the picnic bag. You will be amazed how useful you'll find it. Have a spill, wipe it up. Have the spoon fall down into the beans, retrieve it (with a clean utensil) and wipe off the spoon. Be careful to use a "food safe" cleaner. You can even premix a spray bottle of your own sanitizer. Mix 1 tablespoon of unscented chlorine bleach to one



# PREP

## Cook & Serve

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Reading *Dining Outside at the Annual Picnic or Barbecue* and successfully completing these questions online has been approved for 1 hour of Sanitation continuing education for CDM, CFPPs. CE credit is available ONLINE ONLY. To earn 1 SAN CE hour, purchase the online CE quiz in the ANFP Marketplace. Visit [www.ANFPonline.org/market](http://www.ANFPonline.org/market), select “**Publication**,” then select “**CE article**” at left, then search the title “*Dining Outside at the Annual Picnic or Barbecue*” and purchase the article.

- When it comes to food safety, what item do you not need to bring with you for an outdoor cooking event?
  - Thermometer
  - Potato chips
  - Hand cleaners/sanitizers
- At what temperature should cold foods be held?
  - 47°F
  - 32°F
  - 41°F
- To what temperature should ground beef (hamburgers) be cooked?
  - Until the juices run clear
  - 155°F
  - 165°F
- What is the proper food-safe mixture to make your own chlorine sanitizer?
  - 1 cup/gallon of water
  - 1 drop/gallon of water
  - 1 tablespoon/gallon of water
- How long can food be left in the danger zone before it should be discarded?
  - Four hours
  - Six hours
  - One hour
- Hot foods should be hot-held above what temperature?
  - 165°F
  - 135°F
  - 120°F
- What one thing can create big troubles at an outdoor picnic?
  - Not having enough guests
  - Having it rain
  - Cross-contamination of raw to ready-to-eat foods

## CDMs: New Code of Ethics Acknowledgement When You Log Into Your Record

**IF YOU ARE A CDM**, the first time you log into your certification record after June 1, 2017 you'll see a pop-up check-off box requiring you to affirm that you have read and understand the CDM Code of Ethics. You will only see this message once—the first time you log in after June 1. This is a ‘best practice’ initiated by the Certifying Board for Dietary Managers.



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We serve restaurants, hotels, hospitals, supermarkets, food and beverage manufacturers and many other businesses that enhance quality of life for people around the world.

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