



Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program
A joint project of Texas AgriLife Extension,
Texas Department of Human Services,

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Swisher County
310 West Broadway
Tulia, Texas 79088

Summer Fun Food

June 2017



Healthy Grilling

Warmer weather means it's time to get out of the kitchen and fire up the barbecue. While grilled foods are packed with flavor, the way you prepare them can have a big impact on how healthy they are. Follow these simple steps for a cookout that's tasty *and* good for you.

Dial Down the Heat

When proteins in meat, chicken and fish are cooked at searing temperatures, cancer-causing compounds called heterocyclic amines, or HCAs, form, especially where meat is charred. Charred meats that have been grilled at high temperatures or over an open flame undergo changes that increase chemicals that may increase the risk of cancer. It is best to grill meat low and slow to prevent excess charring. Flipping food frequently also can prevent crusting.

Note: Always use a food thermometer to ensure food has reached a safe minimum internal cooking temperature.

Cut the Fat

Fat from meat can drip into your grill's flame, causing it to flare up. The flame and resulting smoke contain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, which have also been linked to cancer. Trimming the fat from meat prior to cooking can reduce PAHs, as can removing skin from chicken or fish. Cooking outside the flame rather than directly over it can also help prevent flaring.

Marinate

One easy way to minimize HCAs and PAHs is to [marinate meat](#) for at least 30 minutes before grilling. Acidic ingredients such as vinegar, lemon juice or orange juice are especially effective or even green tea.

Mix It Up

Fruits and vegetables are less likely to form carcinogens at high heat, so try swapping produce for some of your animal protein. Barbecue a veggie burger or portobello mushroom. Thread tomatoes, onions, squash and peppers on kebabs. Or grill pineapple, peaches or nectarines for a gooey, naturally sweet dessert. You'll cut carcinogens and add cancer-fighting phytochemicals to your meal in the process.

Keep It Clean

Too much heat isn't the only thing that can turn a good barbecue bad. Make sure your food is safe by discarding any unused marinade and using clean utensils and plates for cooked food. Cooking with a clean grill, free of lighter fluid or charcoal, prevents the contamination and consumption of food with these harmful substances. When the cookout is over, make sure your grill cleaning brush has no loose bristles that can fall onto the grates and potentially stick to food next time you grill.

Source: www.eatright.org

10 Common Food Safety Mistakes

Handling foods safely is much more than throwing away expired milk or washing your fruits and vegetables. While these actions are important, there are several more common food safety mistakes that can result in major consequences.

Don't be one of the 48 million Americans sickened by food poisoning each year. Avoid these 10 common yet dangerous food safety mistakes.

Mistake #1: Tasting food to see if it's still good Never taste your food to check if it has spoiled. You can't taste, see or even smell the bacteria that causes food poisoning, and tasting just a tiny bit of contaminated food can cause serious illness. Throw away all expired food before harmful bacteria grows.

Mistake #2: Putting cooked or ready-to-eat foods back on a plate that held raw meat Never let raw meat, poultry or seafood touch cooked meat or any ready-to-eat foods, as this can cause cross-contamination. Food-borne pathogens from the raw meat can easily spread to ready-to-eat foods and cause food poisoning. Always use separate plates, cutting boards and utensils to keep raw meats, poultry and seafood separate from ready-to-eat foods.

Mistake #3: Thawing food on the counter Never thaw food on the counter. Harmful foodborne pathogens multiply rapidly when foods are in the danger zone between 40°F and 140°F. Instead, always thaw foods in the refrigerator, cold water or in the microwave.

Mistake #4: Washing meat or poultry Never wash raw meat or poultry because the water can easily spread bacteria to your sink, countertops and other kitchen surfaces. Only wash raw fruits and vegetables. Learn more about [washing produce](#).

Mistake #5: Letting food cool before putting it in the fridge Don't leave food out of the refrigerator for more than two hours or one hour if it is over 90°F outside. Illness-causing bacteria can grow rapidly when perishable foods are left in the danger zone — between 40°F and 140°F. Always refrigerate foods in a timely matter. If you are on a road trip, tailgating or picnicking, pack perishable foods in a well-insulated cooler.

Mistake #6: Eating raw cookie dough (and other foods containing uncooked eggs and flour) Never eat any raw eggs because they may contain *Salmonella* or other harmful bacteria. Instead, cook eggs thoroughly and avoid foods that contain raw or undercooked eggs. Even raw dough without eggs should not be consumed as raw flour may contain *E. coli* and cause people to get sick.

Mistake #7: Marinating meat or seafood on the counter. Using raw meat marinade on cooked food. Never marinate meat, poultry or seafood on the counter or use the same marinade for raw meat and cooked food. If you marinate on the counter, harmful germs can multiply rapidly when in the danger zone — between 40°F and 140°F. In addition, if you use the same marinade on raw and cooked meats, the harmful bacteria from the raw food can spread to the cooked food. Always marinate raw meat, seafood and poultry in the refrigerator and only reuse marinade if you bring it to a boil just before using.

Mistake #8: Undercooking meat, poultry, seafood or eggs Cooked food is safe only after it's been heated to a high enough internal temperature to kill harmful bacteria. In order to avoid eating undercooked foods, you must use a food thermometer — the *only* way to determine if cooked foods are safe to eat. Do not rely on sight, smell or taste to tell whether your food is done.

Mistake #9: Not washing your hands Illness-causing bacteria can survive in many places — including on your hands. Always wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm, running water before and after handling food.

Mistake #10: Not replacing sponges and dish rags Ironically, sponges and dishrags are some of the dirtiest tools in your kitchen. Sponges and dishrags can hold harmful foodborne pathogens and cause a serious health risk. Always sanitize your sponges at least every other day and replace them every week or two for best protection against germs. Here is more information on [sponge safety](#) and how to [sanitize your sponge](#).

Surfaces and Sponges

Tips To Keep Kitchen Sponges, Towels, Cloths and Surfaces Safe

Handwashing may be rule No. 1 when it comes to keeping your family safe from food poisoning — but, if kitchen tools and surfaces aren't clean, too, they can spread germs just as easily as your hands.

According to a new survey conducted by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the ConAgra Foods Foundation, dishcloths (64 percent) and sponges (47 percent) are the cleaning tools of choice for most Americans. Ensure that they are clean by following these tips:

Sanitize Your Sponges

When it comes to cleaning sponges, many of us (40 percent) just rinse them with water — a method not sufficient to remove harmful bacteria that may be lurking inside. Remember to pay close attention to what the sponge was used to wipe up. For instance, if it was a drip from raw meat, it's necessary to clean the sponge *before* using it a second time around. To keep sponges safe, make sure they are cleaned properly. Choose one of the following methods to keep them from contaminating the surfaces you are trying to clean:

1. **Let the machine do the washing.** Wash your sponges frequently by throwing them in the HOT cycle of your washing machine or in the dishwasher.
2. **Microwave.** Sanitize sponges by heating them in the microwave for one minute. The USDA reports that this method kills over 99 percent of bacteria.

Know When To Call It Quits

Nearly one in four of us (21 percent) keep sponges until they look dirty or smell bad, while 17 percent wait until sponges fall apart before throwing them out. Another 18 percent say they typically keep their kitchen sponges for three to four weeks, while a few (8 percent) keep them a month or longer. A damp, smelly dish towel/cloth or sponge is a sure sign that unsafe bacteria are inside. Replace worn sponges frequently — don't wait until they're falling apart to get a new one.

Start a New Cycle

While the majority of us (61 percent) clean our dish towels and cloths in the washing machine — make sure you are selecting the proper cycle. Bacteria live and grow in damp, warm conditions, so wash dishtowels and dishcloths frequently in the HOT cycle of your washing machine and dry thoroughly on a high setting.

6 Tips to Lighten Your Carbon Footprint

Carpooling, biking and public transit are all obvious ways to decrease your impact on the environment. Additionally, there are plenty of easy shopping-related actions to lighten your carbon footprint while eating healthier.

Buy Locally and in Season

Not only does eating locally grown fruits and vegetables save fossil fuel, food is likely fresher, tastes better, costs less and retains more nutrients. Plus, it supports local farmers and keeps dollars in the community. Locate local farmers markets, as well as community-supported agriculture organizations, with the USDA's Local Food Directories.

Eat More Plant-based Foods

Animal-based food production emits more greenhouse gases and requires more land and water than plant-based food production. Eating more plant-based protein foods such as beans, lentils and tofu in place of animal-based protein foods is one way to reduce your carbon footprint.

Reduce Packaging

Buying in bulk reduces the amount of plastic, paper, metal and energy that goes into manufacturing the packaging. If bulk isn't available, buy in larger packages such as "family sizes" rather than individual sizes.

BYOB to the Grocery

Bring your own bags. Even reusing paper or plastic supermarket bags from previous visits can lessen the impact of the 100 billion petroleum-based plastic bags used each year in the U.S., which often end up as litter, in the landfill and as a pollutant of our fresh waters.

Conserve Energy in the Kitchen

Purchase Energy Star appliances, which are rated as energy-efficient, if possible. Other energy-saving tips:

- Know what you need before you open the refrigerator or freezer.
- Cook larger quantities and freeze in single meal portions sizes, which not only saves energy, but gets you almost instant home-cooked meals on other days.

Save Water

It is predicted that water, not fuel will be our scarcest commodity in the most-distant future. So, don't let the sink faucet run.

- Repair leaks and drips.
- Install aerators in faucets to make less water more efficient.

Decrease Garbage

When hosting or attending a party, use inexpensive ceramic dishes, real silverware and re-usable plastic cups. Avoid using disposable products. If you must, use disposables that are accepted as part of your neighborhood recycling program.

Source: www.eatright.org

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The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

Summer Fun Food Facts Newsletter is produced by the Swisher County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. If you need any type of accommodation to participate in this program or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact Swisher County Extension office at 806-995-3726 at least 2 weeks prior to the program or event.

Sincerely,



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program -- SNAP. The Better Living for Texans and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service MONTHLY Educational Programs

PROGRAMS

Car Seat Class

Wednesday

June 21, 2017

at 2:00 p.m.

Safe Riders Car Seat Distribution Program

at 2:00 p.m. in Annex Meeting Room

Pre-Registration Required

Call 995-3726