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**Public Health**  
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# Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 30, 2023

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGES SAFE SUMMER FOOD PREPARATION

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is estimated that 48 million people get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die from foodborne diseases each year in the United States. July is National Grilling Month, and the Logan County Department of Public Health urges everyone to be safe when preparing food outdoors. The following are important tips to avoid becoming a foodborne illness statistic while safely enjoying the tastes and smells of food on the grill.

- When grocery shopping, purchase meat, fish, poultry (potentially hazardous food) just before you check out to minimize the time it is left out of refrigeration.
- Prevent cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, fish, and poultry separate from foods that are fully cooked or ready-to-eat. These potentially hazardous foods should also be stored below ready-to-eat food so drippings cannot contaminate the ready-to-eat food item.
- Since harmful bacteria can multiply rapidly at room temperature on meat, fish, poultry, and other potentially hazardous foods, it is best to thaw these items in the refrigerator. If

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you need to thaw food more quickly, other options include using a microwave to thaw as part of the continuous cooking process or thawing food under cold running water. In addition, you should always marinate food in the refrigerator and not at room temperature.

- Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap before and after handling raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Wash work surfaces with hot, soapy water before and after cooking.
- Use a moist cloth or paper towel to clean the grill surface before you cook. If you use a wire bristle brush for cleaning, thoroughly inspect the grill surface before cooking to make sure no wires from the brush have dislodged onto the grill or can get in your food.
- Avoid cross-contamination by throwing out marinades after it has come into contact with raw meat and its juices since marinades, if contaminated, can spread germs onto foods that are ready-to-eat. Use cleaned utensils when removing cooked meat from the grill, and always use a clean plate to remove cooked meat from a grill. NEVER use a dirty plate that is contaminated with raw meat juices to remove the cooked food from the grill.
- Use an accurate thermometer to ensure meats have been cooked to proper temperatures to kill harmful bacteria. If using a smoker, keep the internal temperature of the smoker between 225-300°F to keep meat at a safe internal temperature while it cooks.
- Be sure to cook food to the proper internal temperature. Cook whole cuts of beef, and pork to at least 145°F and allow to rest for 3 minutes before carving or eating. Cook fish to at least 145°F. Cook hamburger and other ground beef to at least 160°F. In addition, cook all poultry and pre-cooked meats, such as hot dogs, to at least 165°F. For additional food safety information, including proper cooking temperatures, you can visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/keep-food-safe.html>.
- When serving, keep food hot to 140°F or warmer until it is served. After the meal, or within 2 hours of cooking, break leftovers down into smaller portions using shallow,

covered pans, and place in refrigeration or the freezer. Breaking food down into smaller portions will enable it to cool faster and more thoroughly. Please note, if it is hotter than 90°F outside, foods should be refrigerated within one hour after cooking.

- If reheating food, always cook leftovers to an internal temperature of 165°F.

The summer months are a great time to enjoy family, friends, and great food. Please do not let foodborne illness spoil your summer fun! For further information regarding food safety, you can visit the Logan County Department of Public Health website at [WWW.LCDPH.ORG](http://WWW.LCDPH.ORG) or you can contact their office at 217-735-2317.

Information Source: CDC

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