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2008

Let's Have a Picnic!

When a fine summer afternoon makes everyone "think picnic," you could find yourself organizing one. If you could just throw the refrigerator under one arm and take it with you, there wouldn't be a problem in caring for food to go. Food poisoning bacteria are a menace that can ruin a picnic of any size. But by practicing some good food safety tips, your fears can be minimized.



Kee**p** food cold (below 41°F). For a worry free picnic, keep your perishable food - ham, hot dogs, hamburgers, starchy salads, deviled eggs, and custard pies, in a cooler. Prepare the salads, eggs and pies the day before to allow them to chill to below 41°F before you pack your picnic. The cooler should be well insulated and packed with ice or you can use blue ice freeze packs. Cold drinks in cans also help keep food cold. Put

the cooler in the passenger area rather than the hot trunk. Keep your covered cooler in the shade and avoid opening and shutting the lid too often.

Take your good kitchen cleanliness practices along on your picnic.

Be sure to wash your hands before working with food. If there's no water faucet available, use disposable wet handwipes. Keep bacteria on raw meat and poultry from spreading. Wash your hands after working with raw meat or poultry and before handling other food. Handle cooked meat and poultry with clean utensils and place onto a fresh plate for serving. Don't reuse utensils, plates, or bowls you used with the raw meat - they may have bacteria growth.



Food and Nutrition Services can assist in providing nutritional information. Call 703-813-4800 and ask for a Registered Dietitian.

To kill any food poisoning bacteria present, all meat, poultry and fish must be thoroughly cooked and served hot. Raw meats should be cooked until the pink color is gone, poultry until there is no red in the joints, and fish until flaky.

Leftovers? Unpack perishables from the cooler just before you will be eating them and put them back in the cooler as soon as you finish eating. **Don't leave them out while you go for a swim or hike.** Once home, providing you were gone no more than 4 hours (and your perishables were on ice, except when cooked and served) you should be able to save the leftovers.

Pack your picnic basket and cooler and enjoy yourself.

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2006

Let's Have a Picnic, Outline

Food Safe Picnics

- I. Preparing, serving, and eating safe food is important whether we are at home, or on a picnic. We must constantly practice safe food handling to avoid illness.**
- II. Keep cold foods cold (below 41°F)**
 - Chill all meats, egg products, starchy salads, and custards to below 41°F before packing for the picnic.
 - Put cold food into a well insulated, lidded cooler with ice around it.
 - Put the cooler in the passenger area of your car rather than in the hot trunk.
 - Keep your cooler in the shade and avoid opening and shutting the lid too often.
- III. Don't spread the bacteria, which may infect the food and ultimately you.**
 - Wash your hands before working with food.
 - Wash your hands again after working with raw meat or poultry.
 - Put the cooked meat onto a clean plate for service.
- IV. Cook meat thoroughly to an internal temperature of 160°F and serve immediately.**
 - Put leftovers in the refrigerator immediately when you get home if you have not been gone more than 4 hours.
 - Providing you have practiced all the above safety tips, your food should be safe to keep and eat the next day.