



Five Tips for Safe Grilling

Whether your family enjoys grilling out year around or just on special occasions, it's important to keep in mind basic food safety practices.

The food safety experts at NSF International have put together five simple tips that consumers can follow to make sure food borne illness doesn't spoil their next outdoor grilling meal.

1. Defrost Foods Safely

Always bring perishable foods straight home from the store and place in the refrigerator or freezer. If thawing frozen items, defrost them in the microwave (if cooking immediately) or overnight in the refrigerator. Never leave frozen foods out at room temperature to thaw.

Foods can also be cooked from the frozen state. It will take approximately 50 percent longer to cook foods if frozen.

2. Marinate Properly

If marinating food, marinate in a refrigerator overnight and dispose of any leftover marinade that has been in contact with raw meat. If you need some marinade for basting, place a small amount of prepared marinade aside in a separate dish before adding raw food.

3. Keep Perishable Foods Cold.

Since bacteria grow the quickest when temperatures are between 40 and 140 degrees F, keep perishable foods refrigerated or iced down until just before placing on a preheated grill.

4. Avoid Cross Contamination.

Don't use the same platter and utensils for uncooked and cooked foods. Platters, utensils, cutting boards and even thermometers need to be thoroughly washed with hot soap and water after each use.

5. Cook Thoroughly and Use a Food Thermometer.

In order to ensure food has reached a safe internal temperature, always use a certified food thermometer. Below are the minimum internal temperatures for various types of meat, poultry and fish:

Whole or ground poultry – 165°F

Ground meats (other than poultry) - 160°F

Fresh Fin Fish - 145°F

Fresh pork, beef, veal – 145°F w/a 3-minute rest time

Rest time refers to the amount of time the meat needs to stand without carving or consuming once it has reached a minimum safe cooking temperature. During the 3 minutes after meat is removed from the heat source and allowed to stand, its temperature remains constant or continues to rise, which destroys harmful bacteria.

For additional food safety tips, contact the NSF Consumer Affairs Office at info@nsf.org or download our [Food Safety fact kit](#).

NSF International is an independent, not-for-profit public health organization that certifies products and writes standards for food, water and consumer goods. NSF has a 65-year history of protecting public health, safety and environment worldwide.