Tips for Handling Foods Safely

It is important to remember: clean, separate, cook and chill

The summer is winding down and families and friends are gathering for celebrations. As you and your family are out enjoying the last of the summer holidays, the Stone County Health Department would like to offer some tips to help you and your family has a safe celebration.

The basics

Wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat and poultry. Wash cutting boards, dishes and utensils with hot, soapy water. Immediately clean spills. Keep raw meat, fish and poultry away from other food that will not be cooked. Use separate cutting boards for raw meat, poultry and egg products and cooked foods.

What is a barbeque without hamburgers?

Consumers should only eat ground beef or ground beef patties that have been cooked to a safe internal temperature of 160° F (USDA).

Color is NOT a reliable indicator that ground beef or ground beef patties have been cooked to a temperature high enough to kill harmful bacteria such as E. coli O157:H7. The only way to be sure ground beef is cooked to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria is to use a meat thermometer to measure the internal temperature. Refrigerate raw meat and poultry within two hours after purchase or one hour if temperatures exceed 90° F. Refrigerate cooked meat and poultry within two hours after cooking.

Remember

Clean — Wash hands and surfaces often.
Separate — Don't cross-contaminate.
Cook — Cook to proper temperatures.
Chill — Refrigerate promptly.

What about the potato salad and baked beans?

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Hot food should be held at 135 °F or warmer. Cold food should be held at 41 °F or colder. When serving food at a buffet, keep food hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays. Keep food cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice or use small serving trays and replace them often.

Leftovers?

Perishable food should not be left out more than 2 hours at room temperature (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F).

Place food into shallow containers and immediately put in the refrigerator or freezer for rapid cooling.

Use cooked leftovers within 4 days.

If you have any questions or would like any additional information please contact Stone County Health Department, Environmental Services at 417-357-8200

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