



ADAMS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Recent salmonellosis outbreaks linked to raw tomatoes, peppers, and cantaloupe serve as a reminder to take extra care when preparing and serving food this summer and throughout the year.

“People can get sick with a foodborne disease at any time of the year, but folks often overlook normal food safety precautions when cooking or eating outdoors,” explains David Gifford, Food Safety Program manager with the state Department of Health. “Preparing and serving food safely is the most important thing you can do to avoid foodborne illness and that starts with making sure you wash your hands.”

Salmonella and other harmful bacteria, such as /E. coli/ O157:H7 and Campylobacter, are often transmitted to people when fecal material from animals or humans contaminates food. Symptoms of these bacterial infections in most people include stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and fever. For infants, the elderly, and people immunocompromised by pre-existing disease, chemotherapy, or radiation therapy, these serious infections can be deadly.

Hot summer weather, combined with food that’s not kept at the right temperature, is also a recipe for harmful bacterial growth and potential illness.

Here are some important tips:

Stay healthy and enjoy summer food by following some simple tips for outdoor cooking and barbecuing.

- Always wash hands before and after handling food and before eating.
- If soap and running water aren’t available, use disposable wet wipes and hand sanitizer.
- Remember to wash hands especially before and after handling raw meat.
- Keep raw meat and its juices from contaminating utensils and other foods.
- Wash whole uncut fruits, including melons, and vegetables.
- Transport salads, freshly cut fruits and vegetables, and other prepared foods in a cooler with ice to keep them cold.
- Bring and serve only enough food for the group to prevent having leftovers sitting out and spoiling.
- Store extra food in a cooler on ice and throw away prepared food that sits out for more than two hours.
- Use clean utensils when grilling, and a thermometer to make sure food is fully cooked to its specific, appropriate temperature.

Cooking temperatures can vary depending on what you’re cooking. Recommended temperatures are:

- Ground beef, hamburgers, egg dishes, and pork -160 °F.
- Steaks, roasts, and fish -145 °F.
- Hot dogs, chicken breasts, ground chicken/turkey, and casseroles and stuffing -165 °F.

Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at www.doh.wa.gov for /a healthy dose of information.

Additional food safety information <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/food/food.htm> is available on the Department of Health’s Web site.

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