

Food Safety Awareness



Summer is the season of picnics, barbecues, and other outdoor activities for Macomb County residents. It is also the season perfect for bugs and bacteria to spread food-borne illnesses. Since food plays such a big role in summer gatherings, it is important to know the safest methods of storing, preparing and cooking foods to protect against food-borne illness.

What are some of the bacteria found in foods?

Bacteria are microscopic organisms that live on almost anything, including our food. Raw and undercooked meat and poultry contain bacteria such as *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Shigella* and *Staphylococcus aureus*. Fresh produce, such as spinach, lettuce, tomatoes, sprouts and melons can contain *Salmonella*, *Shigella* and *E. coli*.

How can I protect against food-borne illness?

Washing your hands with hot, soapy water before and after handling food is the primary defense against food-borne illness. If you are without soap and water, disposable moist towelettes are a safe alternative. There are also methods of preparing, cooking and serving that protect you and your food from harmful bacteria.



PREPARATION TIPS

- Rinse fruits and vegetables, including the skins and rinds that are not eaten, under running water. Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean cloth before packing them for transportation.
- Meat, poultry and seafood can be packed while frozen as long as they are wrapped securely, so as not to contaminate other foods. Always keep raw meats below and not touching ready-to-eat foods.
- Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on counters or outdoors.
- Do not reuse marinade. If extra is needed for basting, save some on the side before marinating.

COOKING/GRILLING TIPS

- When grilling, preheat coals for 20-30 minutes or until lightly gray and ashen.
- Partially cooked food from the stove, oven or microwave should be placed immediately onto the grill.
- Use a meat thermometer to check internal temperature of meats. Simply checking the color is not enough.



- Keep meats separate on the grill, especially hot dogs that may be served to children. This prevents cross-contamination of raw meats and those being heated.

The only way to destroy harmful bacteria is by thorough cooking.

Type of Food	Internal Temperature
Beef, veal, lamb and roast	155°
Steak	155°
Ground Pork and Beef	160°
Poultry Breasts	170°
Whole Poultry	180°
Fin Fish	145°
Shrimp, Lobster and Crab	145°

SERVING TIPS

- Always keep hot foods hot at 140 °F or above and cold foods cold at 41 °F or below.
- Make sure each dish has its own serving spoon to prevent cross-contamination.
- Serve food on a clean plate. Do not reuse a plate that carried raw meat, poultry or fish.
- Pack separate coolers for perishable foods and beverages. Do not pack cooler in the trunk. Keep in air-conditioned part of vehicle. When outdoors, keep coolers in the shade and the lids closed tight.

How do I keep bugs away from my food?



The summer weather is ideal for many insects. It is often difficult to predict what type of bug may come in contact with your food.

Flies are the most common insects that attempt to ruin your outdoor meals. Flies carry bacteria from everything on which they land. It is important not to let them land on or around your food.

The best way to prevent bugs from contaminating your food is by keeping the food stored properly until you are ready to eat. Airtight containers and coolers are the most effective ways to prevent bugs from getting to your food.

Sources: Michigan Department of Agriculture, United States Food and Drug Administration