

Picnic Safety....and Power Outages

Submitted by Barbara Roths, Family Consumer Sciences Agent, Butler Co. Extension

It's the time of year where picnics and grilling are a staple. Food safety while eating outdoors should not be overlooked. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that 1 in 6 Americans will get sick from food poisoning this year. With a little planning, you can have a fun AND a safe picnic.

Plan Ahead: Have coolers and ice to keep items cold. Use separate plates for raw meat and cooked meat to avoid contaminating cooked meat with raw juices.

Cook Thoroughly: Cooking meats to the correct temperature is one of the most important steps in food safety. The only way to insure the correct temperature is with a meat thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the cut, not touching any bone.

Leftovers: As soon as everyone has finished eating, leftovers need to be stored safely.

Cold foods need to be kept cold. Hot foods need to be kept hot, or cooled safely. In order to cool hot foods on a hot day, there needs to be very little of the food left and ample ice or ice blocks. It is important that foods be kept at 40 degrees Fahrenheit, or less, to prevent bacteria from growing. It's also important to take care of leftovers just as soon as you get home!

By following these simple tips, you can have a fun and safe family picnic! Check out this [FDA link](http://www.fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/consumers/ucm109899.htm) for more information on picnic food safety --

<http://www.fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/consumers/ucm109899.htm>

Safe Food Temperature Chart	
Food	Temperature
Steaks and roasts	145°F
Fish	145°F
Pork	145°F
Ground beef	160°F
Egg dishes	160°F
Chicken breasts	165°F
Whole poultry	165°F
Clams, oysters, and mussels	cook until the shells are open

My Power Went Out...Is My Food Safe To Eat?? How long food can stay cold will depend on how full the freezer/refrigerator is and what kinds of foods are in there. Keep the doors closed as much as possible. Put a refrigerator/freezer thermometer inside to see how cold/warm it is. If the temp is still 40F or below, foods can be saved. In the freezer, if there are ice crystals on the packages, they can be saved. Look for other options to save the food by calling friends or relatives that still have power and borrow space in their refrigerator or freezer.

NOW is the time to put thermometers in your refrigerator and your freezer, so you can monitor the temperature regularly. For more information on food and food safety, call Barbara Roths at the Butler County Extension Office, 316-321-9660 or email broths@ksu.edu. Special thanks to Amanda Oakley, KSRE Summer EFNEP intern for information on Picnic Safety.