



Safe Food Handling Reminder for Summer

For Immediate Release: June 28, 2012

Media Contact: Communication Office
Vermont Department of Health 802-863-7281

BURLINGTON – As Vermont approaches the “meat” of grilling season, the Health Department wants to encourage everyone to prepare food safely and avoid foodborne illness.

“The Health Department used to do an annual picnic down at Oakledge Park in Burlington and our food preparation included precautions such as a food thermometer to make sure our burgers were thoroughly cooked,” said Patsy Kelso, state epidemiologist for infectious disease. “We want people to get out and grill, it’s one of the best parts of our short summers in Vermont, but we also want people to step back and take those extra steps that will prevent foodborne illness.”

Improper handling, cooking or cleaning are the most common causes of foodborne illness.

Here are some steps that all cooks can follow to keep their food safe in the summer, and all year long:

Wash your hands in warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before handling any food, especially after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and playing with pets.

Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under clean running water prior to preparation.

Keep raw meat, poultry, fish and their juices away from other foods to avoid cross-contamination. Wash hands, kitchen work surfaces, cutting boards, and utensils with soap and water right after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry.

When grilling, use a meat thermometer to make sure that you cook meat and poultry thoroughly. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F in order to kill germs found in raw and undercooked meat. Place cooked meat on a clean platter to serve, and never back on the one that held the raw meat.

If transporting food to another location, keep it cold to minimize bacterial growth. Use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40°F or below. Keep it out of the direct sun by placing it in the shade or shelter.

Whether you're cooking out in the backyard or on a picnic, always keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. When you're finished eating, refrigerate leftovers promptly in a refrigerator set at 40°F or below.

Young children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with weak immune systems are more at risk for food poisoning and should be especially careful.

Visit the Health Department website for more information on “Safe Food Handling” at: healthvermont.gov.

Follow us on [Twitter](#), join us on [Facebook](#), and visit healthvermont.gov for health information, news, and updates.

###

Vermont Department of Health | 108 Cherry Street | Burlington, VT 05402
Voice: 802-863-7200 | In Vermont 800-464-4343 | Fax: 802-865-7754 | TTY/TDD: Dial 711 first
Health Care Provider Infectious Disease Reporting: 802-863-7240 or 800-640-4374
||| | [Web Browser](#)

