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It’s BBQ Season!

Safe food handling in the summer

Summer means enjoying longer days and spending more time outside with friends and family. To many Canadians, this also means time to cook outdoors on the grill at home, the beach, or the cottage!

To fully enjoy BBQ season, we need to remember to practice food safety all the way from the grocery store to packing up our leftovers. Safe food handling helps us to avoid dangerous illnesses caused by bacteria found in some foods. Food poisoning can happen to anyone, but pregnant women, the elderly, and children are at greatest risk.

Here are some tips to help you to practice safe food handling during the BBQ season:

Shopping
- Buy cold foods, such as meat and other perishables, at the end of your shopping trip, and refrigerate at home or in a cooler within 1 or 2 hours
- Place meat into separate bags, away from other foods, to avoid meat juices leaking onto them

Storing
- Store raw meat immediately when you get home in the refrigerator
- If you do not plan to use raw poultry or ground beef within 1 or 2 days, freeze it right away

Preparing
- Other meats should be frozen if you do not plan to use them for 4 or 5 days
- If you plan to store meat in a cooler before barbecuing, be sure the cooler is kept cold with ice packs, is not in direct sunlight, and is not opened too often
- Make sure meat products are in bags that are well sealed to keep them from leaking into the ice and contaminating other items in the cooler

Thawing – plan ahead!
- Thaw meat fully before grilling so that it cooks evenly
- Always thaw meat in the refrigerator – not on the counter or in the sink
- Sealed packages can be thawed quickly in cold water
- Microwave defrosting is okay if you are placing the food directly onto the grill

Wash your hands for at least 30 seconds with soap and warm water before and after handling raw meat
- If marinating meat, do so in the refrigerator, not on the counter; never use leftover marinade that has touched raw meat on cooked meat
- Use different utensils, cutting boards, and dishes for raw and cooked meats or vegetables
- Be sure your grill is fully preheated and cleaned before placing any meat onto it
- Use a meat thermometer to be sure it has reached the suggested internal temperature
Serving
• Keep your food hot until serving – you can set cooked meats to the side of the grill, away from direct heat, to stay warm
• Use a clean plate to bring food from the grill to the table; putting cooked meat onto the same plate that held raw meat can contaminate it

Clean Up
• Clean all of your cooking equipment after use, and sanitize with a mild bleach solution

Leftovers
• Allow food to cool in shallow containers, and refrigerate within 2 hours
• On a hot, summer day, refrigerate food within 1 hour of cooking, as room temperature will be higher and could cause the meat to spoil

When in doubt, throw it out!


World Hepatitis Day: July 28

About half a billion people around the world, including 600,000 Canadians, are living with chronic Hepatitis B or C. Each year, the World Health Organization (WHO) and others use World Hepatitis Day to educate and bring attention to a disease which impacts so many people world-wide.

The Canadian Liver Foundation suggests we each take the following steps to protect ourselves and others from Hepatitis:

Get protected: learn about the risk factors of Hepatitis B & C and how you can protect yourself against it

Get vaccinated: get immunized against Hepatitis B if you haven’t already

Get tested: talk to your doctor about getting tested if you feel you may have been exposed to Hepatitis B or C in the past

Get treated: learn about treatment options and take action if you have been diagnosed with Hepatitis B or C

To learn more about Hepatitis, and World Hepatitis Day 2017, visit the Patient and Family Learning Centre & Library, or visit these organizations online:

Canadian Liver Foundation: www.liver.ca
World Hepatitis Day: www.worldhepatitisday.org

Know Your Viral Hepatitis Risk

The Canadian Liver Foundation has created an online questionnaire to help you determine if you should talk with a healthcare provider about getting vaccinated and/or tested for viral hepatitis.

Visit www.liver.ca/hepatitis-tool/questions.aspx to fill out the quiz.
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