

Food Safety Outdoors

Preparing food for camps, barbeques and picnics can be very challenging as you do not have access to equipment located in the home or commercial kitchen. You can reduce the chance of getting a foodborne illness in the outdoors by following some simple steps.

Planning

The first step to ensuring your food for your camp, barbeque and picnic are safe to eat is to follow these food safety tips:

- Use an esky or cooler bag to transport food.
- Take adequate utensils and cooking equipment.
- Ensure food is adequately covered and packaged.
- Ensure water, soap and paper towel is available.
- Take a probe thermometer.



Temperature control

Preparing food in the outdoors will likely involve potentially hazardous food. Potentially hazardous foods support the growth of bacteria that may cause illness and include foods such as raw and cooked meat (mince burgers, sausages, chicken), prepared salads and coleslaws.

It is critical that potentially hazardous food is not left in the temperature danger zone for excessive amounts of time. The temperature danger zone is between 5°C and 60°C. The following is a helpful guide for potentially hazardous food:

- Less than two hours, it must be chilled or used immediately
- Longer than two hours but less than four hours, it must be used immediately
- Four hours or longer it must be thrown out.

Please keep the above in mind when eating outdoors.

Protecting food from contamination

It is critical to protect food from contamination. Poor food handling practices can allow bacteria to transfer from a non-food source such as dirty hands/objects to food and from one food to another. Poor food handling practices can lead to food borne illness. To protect food from cross contamination:

- Ensure clean utensils are used in the preparation of food.
- Wash hands prior to preparing or handling food.
- Use separate utensils such as knives, tongs, containers, chopping boards for different foods.
- Keep raw meats away from ready to eat foods such as salads.

Cooking

One of the most important things you can do when preparing food in the outdoors is to cook it thoroughly.

- Ensure frozen meat is properly thawed before you cook it.
- Cook hamburgers, mince, chicken and sausages right through until any juices run clear. You can use your probe thermometer to check the internal temperature, aim for 75°C.
- Steaks and joints of beef or lamb, can be served rare (not cooked in the middle) as long as the outside has been properly cooked. This will kill any bacteria that might be on the outside of the meat.
- Ensure you turn the meat regularly to ensure you cook it evenly.



Handwashing

Food safety is in your hands. Clean hands will provide the best possible chance of preventing bacteria from yourself to the food you are preparing.

- Ensure you have access to potable water, preferably in a large water container with a tap at the bottom.
- A supply of soap.
- A supply of paper towels and a bin for used paper towels.
- Consider sanitising gel or wipes if there won't be any water.

Did you know...?

- An estimated 4.1 million cases of foodborne illness occur annually in Australia.
- Foodborne illness does not just happen, it is usually caused by poor handling of food in which bacteria are passed from the food handler to the food.
- Foodborne illness is not just something that can be caught from a restaurant or takeaway premise, it is likely it has come from food eaten at home!

Foodborne illness

Food borne illness is most often caused by bacteria from food that has been poorly handled, stored or cooked. The food may actually look, taste and smell normal but still be no good.

Bacteria can multiply on most foods if the temperature is between 5°C and 60°C. This is called the temperature danger zone.

Foods that commonly cause foodborne illness include chicken, seafood, eggs, raw egg products (eg mayonnaise), minced red meats, dairy products, cooked rice and cooked wet dishes (eg stews and curries).

The risk of foodborne illness can be significantly reduced by handling, storing and cooking food appropriately.

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