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Ampifying Life

Shandi Andres, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent
K-State Research and Extension, Flint Hills District

Safe Summer Food

With the summer heat soaring high, it is important to think about the safety of our food. During normal conditions, non-perishable food items should not sit out for more than two hours. In hot weather (above 90°F), food should never sit out for more than one hour. It is important to keep this in mind when purchasing food from the grocery store. If there are errands to run after buying groceries, a long drive home, or any situation in which food would be left out in the heat it would be wise to put food items in a cooler with ice. Keep in mind it does not take long for a car to heat up while sitting in the parking lot if errands are run after grocery shopping. Be sure to make groceries the last stop before returning home.

When attending a picnic or a cookout, be sure to take cold food items in a cooler with ice. Keep coolers out of the direct sunlight by placing it in the shade. This will make it easier for coolers to maintain a proper temperature. A full cooler will keep items cold longer than a partially filled one. The general rule of thumb is: Hot foods should stay HOT and cold foods should stay COLD. On really hot day, consider serving cold food in small portions and leave the large portion in the cooler. This will help prevent a large amount of food going bad.

When cooking on the grill, be sure to leave cold foods in the fridge until you are ready for them. Cleaning your preparation and cooking space helps to keep foods safe. Having Clorox wipes or a food safe cleaning solution to wipe cooking areas helps to prevent germs, bacteria, and unwanted particles from ending up in your food. Prevent cross-contamination by washing the dishes and utensils used with the raw meats BEFORE placing cooked food on the same plate or using the same utensils. Using a meat thermometer is the best way to check for doneness. Remember "anything that flies 165°F" (poultry, turkey, etc). Whole meats (roasts, steak, fish) should be cooked to 145°F. The USDA recommends that pork and ground beef be cooked to 160°F.

The first thing to remember is to wash your hands often. You should always wash hands before you begin, after handling raw meats, between foods tasks, after touching your face, hair, anything unclean, and after going to the restroom.

Food safety and food preparation always falls under the umbrella of Family and Consumer Sciences. If you have any specific topics you would like to see addressed, please give your suggestions. If you ever have questions, feel free to call or email them

in. Shandi Andres, Flint Hills Extension District, 501 W Main, Council Grove, KS 66846.
(620) 767-5136 or sdandres@ksu.edu