



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Kentucky Health Experts Advise Fourth of July Food Safety**

**FRANKFORT, KY (June 30, 2020)** – The Fourth of July holiday offers opportunities for outdoor fun with family and friends. However, these warm weather events also present opportunities for foodborne bacteria to thrive. As food heats up in summer temperatures, bacteria multiply rapidly. To protect yourself, your family, and friends from foodborne illness during warm-weather months, safe food handling when eating outdoors is critical. Health officials with the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH), located within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), urge the public to take steps to avoid illness. Read on for simple food safety guidelines for transporting your food to the picnic site, and preparing and serving it safely once you've arrived.

- **Remember to pack and transport food safely.** Keep cold food cold. Place cold food in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs. Cold food should be stored at 40 °F or below to prevent bacterial growth. Meat, poultry, and seafood may be packed while still frozen so that they stay colder longer. Organize cooler contents, and consider packing beverages in one cooler

and perishable foods in another. That way, as picnickers open and reopen the beverage cooler to replenish their drinks, the perishable foods won't be exposed to warm outdoor air temperatures. Keep coolers closed: once at the picnic site, limit the number of times the cooler is opened as much as you can. This helps to keep the contents cold longer.

- **Don't cross-contaminate.** Be sure to keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood securely wrapped. This keeps their juices from contaminating prepared/cooked foods or foods that will be eaten raw, such as fruits and vegetables. Remember that food safety begins with proper hand cleaning — including in outdoor settings. Before you begin setting out your picnic feast, make sure hands and surfaces are clean. If you don't have access to running water, use a water jug, some soap, and paper towels. You may also consider using moist disposable towelettes for cleaning your hands. Take care to keep all utensils and platters clean when preparing food.
- **Cook food thoroughly.** When it's time to cook the food, have your food thermometer ready. Use a meat thermometer to make sure you reach safe internal cooking temperatures: 145° F for fresh beef, pork, veal and lamb, with a 3 minute rest time; 160° F for hamburgers and ground pork, veal, or lamb; 165° F for poultry; 145° F for fish. Always be sure your food is cooked thoroughly. Keep "ready" food hot. Grilled food can be kept hot until served by moving it to the side of the grill rack, just away from the coals. This keeps it hot but prevents overcooking. Don't reuse platters or utensils. Using the same platter or utensils that previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood allows bacteria from the raw food's juices to spread to the cooked food. Instead, have a clean platter and utensils ready at grill-side to serve your food. Check for foreign objects in food. If you clean your grill using a bristle brush, check to make sure that no detached bristles have made their way into grilled food.
- **Avoid sharing utensils and serving foods buffet style.** It may help limit the spread of the novel coronavirus (2019) And **limit**the amount of food that is shared outside the immediate family.

- **Finally, remember to keep food at proper temperatures.** The key is to never let your picnic food remain in the “Danger Zone” — between 40 °F and 140 °F — for more than 2 hours, or 1 hour if outdoor temperatures are above 90 °F. This is when bacteria in food can multiply rapidly, and lead to foodborne illness.

For more information on food safety, visit  
<https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/index.html>.

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*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*

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