

Barbecue and picnic food safety advice

If you're planning on having a barbecue or picnic, there are some tips to help prevent food poisoning. Remember that keeping food cool is important. Generally, the cooler the temperature the slower germs will grow.

Barbecues

The main food poisoning risks when using a barbecue are:

- undercooked meat
- spreading germs from raw meat onto food that's ready to eat

The safest option is to pre-cook your food indoors then put the cooked food on the outdoor barbecue for a short time for flavour.

When cooking burgers, sausages, kebabs, pork, turkey and chicken, always check that:

- the meat is steaming hot throughout
- there is no pink meat visible when you cut into the thickest part
- meat juices run clear

Once served, food should not sit out for longer than two hours, or one hour if it's very hot outside.

You can get more information and advice on the [food safety barbecuing page](#).

It's also important to be alert to the risks of [carbon monoxide when barbecuing](#).

Picnic food

Cases of [food poisoning](#) from campylobacter, E. coli, listeria and salmonella increase in the summer months.

Picnickers could be putting themselves at risk by:

- leaving their food out for longer than the recommended two hours
- carrying food to picnics in containers such as plastic bags and picnic baskets, rather than the recommended cool boxes
- putting picnic leftovers back in the fridge or using them for a meal the next day, regardless of how long they have been left out

To help everyone enjoy their summer picnics without worry, these easy tips can help keep you safe:

- rinse fresh fruits (including those with rinds) and vegetables under running tap water before packing them in the cool box
- place cold food in a cool box with ice or frozen gel packs – cold food

should be stored at 5 °C or below to prevent bacterial growth

- pack drinks in one cool box and perishable foods in another – if using freezer packs (frozen drinks work well for this purpose), distribute them throughout the box, not all at the bottom
- keep your cool box closed – once at the picnic site, limit the number of times the cool box is opened as much as you can (this helps to keep the contents cold for longer)

Once you've served the picnic, dishes should not sit out for longer than two hours, or one hour if it's very hot outside.

After this, the risk of bacteria increases and it becomes unsafe to eat, so best to throw it away when you get home.

Find out more on the [cooking for parties and events page](#).

More useful links