



"Your Local  
Health Department"

**News Release**  
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## **Branch - Hillsdale - St. Joseph Community Health Agency**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Eating Outdoors in the Summer**

Summer is quickly approaching making it a great time for family and friends to spend more time cooking on the grill and enjoying outdoor picnics. With the weather warming up, the risk for foodborne illness increases. According to the Food and Drug Administration, there are approximately 48 million cases of foodborne illness annually. Perishable foods such as meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, salad dressing and fresh fruit should not sit out for more than two hours. Food sitting out for too long can lead to foodborne illness outbreaks.

To make sure your summer picnics and cookouts are enjoyed by all, the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency reminds residents that during warm weather it is especially important to take extra precautions and practice safe food handling. Stay healthy and safe during warmer months by following these food safety precautions:

## **Storing food**

- *When bringing food to a picnic or cookout, store food in an insulated cooler filled with ice. Foods that need to be kept cold include raw meat, poultry, seafood, deli meat to avoid harmful bacteria from spreading. Also avoid opening cooler repeatedly so your food stays cooler longer.*

## **Food Thermometers**

- *When cooking meats, using food thermometers can help prevent foodborne illness. Using food thermometers can also help keep families safe from harmful bacteria and help avoid overcooking, giving you a safe and flavorful meal. According to the USDA, here are recommendations to ensure safe minimum internal temperatures for cooking at home:*
  - *Steaks & Roasts - 145 °F (160 = Medium)*
  - *Fish - 145 °F*
  - *Pork chops - 160 °F*
  - *Ground Beef - 160 °F*
  - *Egg Dishes - 160 °F*
  - *Chicken Breasts - 165 °F*
  - *Whole Poultry - 165 °F*
  - *Leftovers- Reheating 165° F*

## **Cooking on the grill:**

- *Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw meats and ready-to-eat items like vegetables or bread.*
- *Keep perishable foods (meat, poultry, eggs etc.) cold until it is ready to cook.*
- *Always use a fresh, clean plate and tongs for serving cooked food.*
- *Never reuse items that touched raw meat or poultry to serve the food once it is cooked.*

## **Clean: Wash hands often**

- *Wash your hands with warm soapy water for 20 seconds before and after handling food.*
- *Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils etc. with hot soapy water after preparing each food item.*
- *Wash fruits and vegetables with cold water before using.*

### **Do not cross-contaminate**

- *Separate raw, cooked and ready to eat foods while shopping, preparing or storing.*
- *Never place cooked food on a plate which previously held raw meat, poultry or seafood.*

By following these simple food safety tips, you can help ensure healthy, happy summer memories are made by all. To learn more food safety tips please visit our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org) and [www.foodsafety.gov/keep/events/summervacations/](http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/events/summervacations/). If you have any questions please contact Joseph Frazier, Environmental Health Coordinator at 517-279-9561 ext. 0154#.

To receive family friendly tips and recipes that support healthy eating, like our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/BHSJWIC/>.