

Putnam County Health Department

In Cooperation with
The Department of Health of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Keep your Food Safe for the 4th of July

Protect yourself and your family from foodborne illness

Putnam County, MO – As you plan your Fourth of July picnics and gatherings, be sure to put food safety on your checklist. There are ways to ensure that the food you prepare will be safe as well as delicious. Foodborne illness is the sickness that results from eating foods that are contaminated with harmful bacteria. Although you may not see, smell or taste these "bugs", under the right conditions, they may be present on our food when they are purchased, during preparation, cooking, serving or in storage. Foodborne illnesses rise during the warm temperatures of the summer, but you don't have to be one of the unlucky ones. Most cases of foodborne illness can be prevented through some simple food handling and storage steps. All it takes is a little information and everyday weapons like soap and water, a refrigerator and a food thermometer.

To keep fourth of July picnics safe from foodborne illness, The Partnership for Food Safety Education says consumers can Fight BAC!TM (bacteria) by following these four simple steps to safer food:

1. **Clean**

- Wash hands, utensils and surfaces with hot soapy water before and after food preparation, and especially after preparing meat, poultry, eggs or seafood to protect against bacteria.
- Using a disinfectant cleaner or a mixture of bleach and water on surfaces and antibacterial soap on hands can provide some added protection.

2. **Separate**

- Keep raw meat, poultry, eggs and seafood and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods
- Never place cooked food on an unwashed plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, eggs or seafood.

3. **Cook**

- Cook food to the proper internal temperatures (this varies for different cuts and types of meat and poultry) and check with a food thermometer. For specific temperatures visit <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes-and-cooking/meat-and-poultry-temperature-guide/index.html>.



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4. **Chill**

- Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours of being outside. Make sure the refrigerator is set at no higher than 40°F and that the freezer unit is set at 0°F.
- To properly clean fresh fruits and vegetables, rinse under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten.
- Rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean cloth towel or paper towel.
- Never use detergent or bleach to wash fresh fruits or vegetables. Bleach and other cleansers are not intended for consumption.

For more information on forborne illnesses and safe food handling, visit the Partnership for Food Safety Education website at www.fightbac.org.

The Putnam County Health Department is committed to the protection and improvement of health and the quality of life for all members of our surrounding community. For more information, call (660) 947-2429 or visit www.putnamcohealthdept.org.



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