



## **Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact: Christina Dettman**  
502-564-7042, 502-229-2791 (cell)

**Barbara Fox**  
502-564-6786, ext.3102

### **Keep Food Safe for July 4th Celebrations**

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (June 27, 2019) – 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.

Remember to pack and transport food safely and to 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 will not be exposed to warm outdoor air temperatures. Keep coolers closed and once at the picnic site, limit the number of times the cooler is opened as much as you can to help keep the contents cold longer.

Do not cross-contaminate foods. Be sure to keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood securely wrapped to keep their juices from contaminating prepared/cooked foods or foods 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 do not 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.

Ensure that food is cooked thoroughly. 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; and 145° F for fish. Grilled food can be kept hot until served by moving it to the side of the grill rack, just away from the coals, keeping it hot but preventing overcooking. Do not 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. Have a clean platter and utensils ready at grill-side to serve your 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.

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

-30-

*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, the Department for Aging and Independent Living 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.*

