

Food Safety Series (No.5)

April 2019

Guidance on Departmental Barbecue Safety

WEB VERSION



Cases of food poisoning almost double during the summer months due in part to our passion for

barbecuing and alfresco dining with contributing factors being undercooking of raw meat and bacterial contamination of foods.

To ensure food served at a BBQ will be safe the following simple precautions should be adhered to:

Planning and Preparation

Purchase all foods from a reputable supplier and retain receipts. People should be discouraged from bringing their own food to share or cook on the BBQ as there is no guarantee that it has been stored and handled correctly. If using an external caterer, you are advised to use only those listed with the University.

Purchase food as close as possible to the date of the BBQ and store meats and salads etc. correctly i.e. raw and ready to eat separately, below 8°C (preferably 5°C) in a refrigerator until required.

When transporting food to the site of the BBQ (and until they are cooked/served) meats and salads should be stored separately in suitable cool boxes.

Keep raw meats separate from salads/ready to eat foods **at all times**.

Ensure there is soap, hot water and disposable paper towels available for hand washing. It is advisable to have a supply of disposable gloves for those handling bread rolls etc.

Have sufficient and suitable utensils and containers available to ensure that the same ones are not used for raw and cooked foods.

Thaw frozen food thoroughly, preferably on a plate at the bottom of a refrigerator, before cooking (unless manufacturer's instructions state they can be cooked from frozen).

Do not prepare or cook food too far in advance. Hot food must be eaten within 2 hours of removal from heat, after this time it

must be thrown away. All chilled foods e.g. salads, dips etc must be eaten within 4 hours of removal from refrigerated conditions, after this time they must be thrown away.

Where salads are to be made rather than bought pre-packed it is essential that all utensils, chopping boards etc. are clean and have not been used for raw meats without thorough cleaning and disinfection.

Wash hands thoroughly before preparing food and especially after handling raw meat.

Provide adequate and suitable containers for storage and removal of waste.

Clean the BBQ and all equipment before use.

Important Points with regard to BBQ Cooking

Ensure personnel involved in cooking food are competent and understand food safety principles.

Remember raw meat can contain food poisoning bacteria and must not be allowed to touch food that has already been cooked or is ready to eat (such as salads and burger buns). Anything that touches raw meat can carry the bacteria to other food.

Do not use plates, utensils etc that have touched raw meats for cooked/ready to eat foods.

Wash hands thoroughly after handling raw meat.

Do not allow raw meat to touch or drip onto cooked or ready to eat foods.

Be prepared and light the BBQ well in advance and wait until the charcoal is glowing red, with a powdery grey surface, before you start to cook.

Do not allow raw meat to touch partially or fully cooked food on the grill.

Ensure foods are piping hot all the way through to the center of the thickest part with no pinkness remaining and juices run clear. It is preferable to use sanitised calibrated probe.

Ensure the food is turned regularly and moved around the barbecue to cook it evenly. Charred doesn't mean well done. Even if meat is burnt on the outside, it might not be cooked properly on the

inside. Do not guess if in doubt cut the food open and if in doubt **DO NOT SERVE / CONSUME**. If cooking for large numbers of people, you could cook meat indoors and finish on the BBQ for added flavour. However, pre-cooked foods **must** be stored correctly and safely under temperature control before being finished off on the BBQ.

Do not add sauce or marinade to cooked food if it has already been used with raw meat.

Have sufficient and suitable utensils containers available to ensure that the same ones are not used for raw and cooked foods.

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold and where necessary covered but do not leave food standing around. Throw leftovers away and never re-heat.

Anyone preparing or cooking food must have an understanding of Food Safety principles and be trained in basic level food hygiene. As a minimum they should read this leaflet.

Anyone preparing or cooking food must be trained in Allergen Awareness and read the leaflet on 'Allergens'.

General Safety (not food safety)

It is not advisable for the person(s) cooking to drink alcohol as this may affect their judgment.

To light charcoal, always use proper BBQ lighter fuel or self-igniting charcoal; never use petrol or other inflammable liquids to try and start the BBQ. If using gas, check joints for leaks with soapy water before use.

Ensure that the grill is lit immediately, if the grill fails to light at first or second attempt, turn off gas immediately and leave for a few minutes before relighting.

Position BBQ's on level ground, well away from fences, hedges and trees, or anything that could catch fire. Keep children and animals well away from the BBQ.

Ensure games or activities such as rounders, frisbee, football or cricket take place well away

from the BBQ.

Once lit, never leave a BBQ unattended. Never attempt to move a lit BBQ. Remember BBQ's can be dangerous, the grill is very hot and can cause nasty burns, or even serious fires if knocked over.

Take care when cooking fatty foods as fat drips onto the coals may a flare up.

Keep a fire blanket, bucket of water, sand or a hose/water sprayer close by in case of accidents.

Ensure the charcoal is cold and/or the gas securely turned off or disconnected before leaving the site. When using a gas BBQ, turn off the cylinder before the BBQ controls, to ensure any residual gas in pipeline is used up.

Further Information

- University Fire Safety Unit
fire.safety.office@admin.cam.ac.uk
- on the Food Standards Agency website
(www.food.gov.uk)
- in other leaflets in the Food Safety Series
- from MAS Environmental
(www.masenv.co.uk/fsq)

Other leaflets in the Food Safety Guidance

Notes Series

- 1 Food Safety – An introduction to legislation for University premises
- 2 Catering Options - A guide for departments and faculties
- 3 Staff Kitchens and Tearooms – General hygiene requirements
- 4 Food Hygiene Training Requirements
- 6 Purchase, Delivery and Storage of Food
- 7 Preparation and Service of Food
- 8 Personal Hygiene Requirements for Individuals Preparing or Serving Food
- 9 Cleaning and Pest Control in Food Preparation Areas
- 10 Food Safety Guidance for Departmental Christmas Parties
- 11 Food Safety for Charity Events – A guide for departments and faculties
- 12 Food Complaints - A guide for departments and University operated food outlets
- 13 Allergens

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