

Mission:
To protect, promote & improve the health
of all people in Florida through integrated
state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**KEEP IT CLEAN, KEEP IT COLD, KEEP IT COVERED:
FOOD SAFETY REMINDERS THIS FOURTH OF JULY**

TALLAHASSEE— The Florida Department of Health reminds all residents to enjoy food safely this Fourth of July holiday weekend. It is often easy to forget simple steps like proper hand washing can protect our family and friends. The best way to prevent illness is to practice safe food preparation and food handling.

“This Fourth of July holiday weekend, let’s choose healthy foods to enjoy with our family and friends,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “This includes safe food handling and storage to prevent food borne illness.”

For your summer festivities, consider these careful tips to avoid food-borne illness:

- Make sure your cooking area is clean: wash hands, cutting boards, utensils and countertops;
- Keep raw meat, poultry and seafood separate from ready-to-eat foods;
- Keep your refrigerator below 40°F and refrigerate perishable items;
- If perishable food items have been left out of the refrigerator for longer than two hours, discard them. In weather above 90°F, food should not be left out for more than one hour.
- Be especially careful preparing food for children, pregnant women, those in poor health and older adults; and
- Report suspected illness from food to your local county health department or by completing a food or waterborne illness [complaint form](#).

Most summer holiday gatherings take place outside and Florida’s heat poses special challenges for food safety. If your plans include grilling outside, keep these important tips in mind:

- When transporting food to another location, pack food directly from the refrigerator into the cooler immediately before leaving home;
- Keep meat and poultry refrigerated until ready to use. Only remove meat and poultry immediately before being placed on the grill; and
- Never partially grill meat or poultry to finish cooking later.

Each year, one in six Americans gets sick from preventable illnesses related to food poisoning. For more information on various food-borne illnesses and more ways to keep you safe, visit the CDC's Food Safety page at www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/.

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