News Release

Date: July 1, 2021
For Immediate Release
Contact: 518-565-4840

Summer Food Safety

Plattsburgh, July 1, 2021. While this holiday weekend is an ideal time for outdoor picnics and barbecues, summer is also a time when foodborne illnesses spike. The Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) reminds residents to follow safety steps when preparing food at home all summer long.

“Whether you are just serving your family dinner or having friends over for a barbecue, you should be sure to clean, chill, separate, and cook your food properly,” stated Karen Noonan, Senior Public Health Sanitarian at CCHD.

With higher temperatures in the summer, more attention should be paid to perishable food items during the cooking, serving, and storing process. “Bacteria can multiply quickly if left at room temperature or between 45°F and 140°F – what we call the danger zone,” explained Ms. Noonan. “Never leave perishable foods out for more than 2 hours, 1 hour if the temperature is higher than 90°F.”

To help keep your family and friends safe from food borne illness this summer, follow these safety steps.

- Clean
  - Clean surfaces and utensils with soap and water.
  - Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food and before eating.
  - Wash all fruits and vegetables under plain running water before eating, cutting or cooking, even if you plan to peel them.

- Chill
  - Chill raw and prepared foods as soon as possible if you’re not eating them right away. Cold food should be held at or below 45°F.
  - Foods that need to be kept cold include: raw meat, poultry, and seafood; luncheon and deli meats or sandwiches; summer salads (tuna, chicken, egg, pasta, or seafood); cut up fruit and vegetables; and perishable dairy products.
  - Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Never leave food out for more than one hour when the temperature is above 90°F.
  - Thaw frozen food safely in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave. Never thaw foods on the counter, bacteria multiply quickly in the parts of the food that reach room temperature.
o A full cooler will maintain its cold temperature longer than a partially filled one. Keep your food colder longer by placing coolers out of the direct sun and limit how often you’re opening them. Drain off water as ice melts and replace ice frequently.

- **Separate**
  o Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw meat and poultry, cooked meat and poultry, and ready-to-eat items like vegetables or bread.
  o 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’s cooked.

- **Cook**
  o Keep hot food hot. Hot food should be kept at or above 140°F. If bringing hot food to an outdoor party, eat it within two hours. When re-heating any pre-cooked food be sure it reaches 165°F.
  o Use a food thermometer to see if your food is the right temperature. Food is safely cooked when the internal temperature gets high enough to kill germs that can make you sick.
  o Whole cuts of beef, pork, veal, and lamb should be cooked to at least 145°F. Ground beef should be cooked to 160°F. Poultry should be cooked to at least 165°F.

“Following these food safety tips at home to prepare food properly can help to keep your family safe from food borne illnesses,” added Ms. Noonan


About the Clinton County Health Department:

The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department’s Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit our website at [www.clintonhealth.org](http://www.clintonhealth.org) or connect with us on Facebook (@clintonhealth), Twitter (@ClintonCountyHD), and Instagram (clintoncountyhealth).

###