BBQ Food Safety Tips

Keep your summertime cookouts healthy by using these 10 simple guidelines for grilling food safely.

1. **Storage**
   Refrigerate meat and poultry immediately after purchasing. Freeze poultry and ground meat that won't be used in 1 or 2 days; freeze other meat within 4 to 5 days.

2. **Thawing**
   Completely defrost meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks more evenly. Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing or thaw sealed packages in cold water. You can microwave defrost if the food will be placed immediately on the grill.

3. **Marinating**
   Be sure to marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. If some of the marinade is to be used as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion of the marinade *before* putting raw meat and poultry in it.

4. **Transporting**
   When carrying food to another location, keep it cold to minimize bacterial growth. Use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40 °F or below.

5. **Keep Cold Food Cold**
   Keep meat and poultry refrigerated until ready to use. Only take out the meat and poultry that will immediately be placed on the grill. When using a cooler, keep it out of the direct sun by placing it in the shade or shelter.

6. **Keep everything clean**
   Wash your hands after touching raw meat! Use utensils to handle the cooked meat. Do not place cooked meat on surfaces that had raw meat. If you're eating away from home, find out if there's a source of clean water. If not, bring water and soap for preparation and cleaning.

7. **Cook Thoroughly**
   Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature.

SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES	
Whole poultry	165 °F
Poultry breasts	165 °F
Ground poultry	165 °F
Hamburgers, beef	160 °F
Beef, veal, and lamb (steaks, roasts and chops)	
Medium rare	145 °F
Medium	160 °F
Well done	170 °F
All cuts of pork	160 °F

8. **Measure Temperature Properly**
   Insert the thermometer into the center of the meat, which is the least cooked part. Be careful not to pass through the meat and touch the cooking surface or you will get a false high temperature reading.

9. **Keep Hot Foods Hot**
   After cooking meat and poultry on the grill, keep it hot until served - at 140 °F or warmer. Keep cooked meats hot by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals where they could overcook. At home, the cooked meat can be kept hot in an oven set at approximately 200 °F.

10. **Serving the food**
    When taking food off the grill, use a clean platter & utensils. Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry. Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours. Refrigerate within 1 hour when the outside temperature is above 90 °F.

For more information, call the USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline: 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854)