How to Keep Your Food Safe This Summer

The warmer weather is ideal for outdoor picnics and barbecues, but it also provides a perfect environment for bacteria in food to multiply rapidly and cause foodborne illness (food poisoning). During the summer months, it is especially important to take these extra food safety measures when preparing perishable foods such as meat, poultry, seafood, and egg/mayonnaise products:

- **Wash, Wash, Wash Your Hands.**
  Before and after handling food, always wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least **20 seconds**—the length of time it takes to sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" **twice**.

- **Marinate and Separate.**
  Always marinate food in the refrigerator.
  Never re-use sauce that was used to marinate raw meat or poultry on cooked food.

- **Check Your Temperature.**
  The only way to make sure a food is cooked thoroughly is to use a food thermometer.
  Hamburgers: **160 °F** • Poultry, hot dogs & sausages: **165 °F** • Pork chops,* steaks* & fish: **145˚F**
  (*Need to wait 3 minutes before cutting and eating.)

- **Clean Your Plate.**
  When taking foods off the grill, do not put cooked food items back on the same plate (or cutting board) that held raw food, unless it has been washed with hot water and soap first.

- **Follow the Two-hour Rule.**
  Foods should never sit out for more than **two hours** before going in the refrigerator. But when the weather is hot (**above 90˚F**), that time is reduced to **one hour**!

Although everyone is susceptible, some people are at greater risk for getting foodborne illness:

- Pregnant Women
- Young Children
- Older Adults
- People with Immune Systems Weakened by Disease or Medical Treatment (diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, transplant patients, etc.)

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