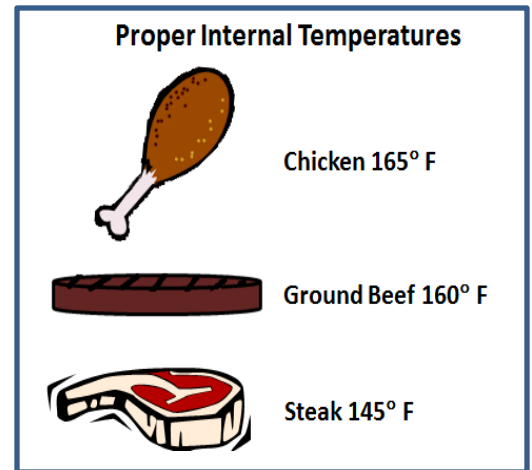


## Summer Food Safety

Summer in Wisconsin means warmer weather and outdoor activities with family and friends. Our excitement about grilling and picnics rises with the temperatures. However, there is a greater risk for foodborne illness when cooking and eating outdoors. Over 45 million Americans experience a foodborne illness each year. Foodborne illnesses are especially serious for pregnant women, people with chronic disease, and older adults, read the following food safety guidelines to help keep you and your family safe this summer!

**Outdoor Cooking:** When preparing to cook outside, remember to bring a separate set of utensils and plates for raw versus cooked meats to avoid cross contamination. Use a pair of tongs to place the raw meat on the grill and for the first flip. Switch to a new pair afterwards. If you find yourself with only one pair of tongs and unable to sanitize them with hot soapy water, at the very least, leave them on the grill so the heat can kill some of the bacteria. A food thermometer is the best way to be sure that meats are safe to eat. Safe temperatures that the thermometer should read when cooking various types of meat are described by the graphic on the right.



If you do not have a meat thermometer, the [finger test](#) method can help you figure out the doneness of meat. As the meat cooks, use your tongs or (clean) fingertips to press the meat, comparing the firmness to the finger test. Once food is cooked, follow the 2-hour rule; only leave food out for a maximum of 2 hours. The time drops to 1 hour if temperatures outside reach above 90°F, since bacteria grow faster at 90°F - 100°F.



**Outdoor Cooling:** Keep all fresh foods cool at 40°F in an insulated cooler using ice, frozen items or gel packs. The cooler should be the last item you pack before you leave. When travelling, avoid placing your cooler in the trunk since it gets hotter than the rest of the car. When outside, try to keep the cooler in the shade. Maintain the temperature inside the cooler- avoid opening it unnecessarily by keeping drinks in a different cooler than food. Clearly mark the different coolers by taping the packaging from beverages on the lid so people know what is inside without having to dig through the cooler. Fresh food should only be left outside of the cooler for up to 2 hours (or 1 hour if temperature outside reaches above 90°F). These include:



- meat
- poultry
- eggs
- seafood
- dairy products
- pasta or rice,
- cooked or fresh, peeled and cut vegetables or fruit

Outdoor food safety involves a little advanced preparation. For example, if the site has no running water remember to bring bottled water, sanitizing wipes or gels to keep picnic surfaces and hands clean before and after eating. Following these tips will help keep your family safe. Enjoy the summer!