

## Food Safety Guidance for Barbecue Safety

Food poisoning cases increase exponentially in the summer, partly due to the popularity of barbecues and alfresco dining. Contributing factors include undercooked meat and poultry and the risk of spreading bacteria from raw meat/poultry to ready-to-eat food.

To ensure food served at a BBQ will be safe the following simple precautions should be adhered to:

### Planning and Preparation

All food should be purchased from reputable suppliers, with receipts retained. Individuals should be discouraged from bringing their own food to share or cook at the BBQ, as there is no assurance it has been stored or handled safely. If using an external caterer, you are advised to use only those listed with the University ([External catering suppliers | University Catering](#)).

Purchase food as near to the BBQ date as possible and store meats and salads correctly. You must keep raw and ready-to-eat foods separate and refrigerate them below 8°C (ideally 5°C) until needed.

When transporting food to the BBQ site, and until it is cooked or served, raw meats and salads must be stored separately in different cool boxes (with frozen ice blocks).

Ensure there is soap, hot water, and disposable paper towels available for hand washing. It is advisable to have a supply of disposable gloves for those handling ready-to-eat foods such as bread rolls etc.

Have sufficient, food safe and ideally colour coded utensils and containers available to ensure that the same ones are not used for raw and ready-to-eat foods.

Defrost frozen meat/poultry fully at the bottom of the fridge in a container to catch any juices/drips (unless manufacturer's instructions state they can be cooked from frozen).

Do not prepare or cook food too far in advance. Hot food must be eaten within 2 hours of removal from heat, after this time it must be thrown away. All chilled foods e.g. salads, dips etc. must be eaten within 2 hours of removal from the refrigerator, after this time they must be thrown away.

Where salads are to be made rather than bought pre-packed it is essential that all utensils, chopping boards etc. are clean and have not previously been used for raw meats without thorough cleaning and disinfection in between.

Provide suitable containers for the storage and removal of waste.

Clean the BBQ and all equipment before it is used.

Key food safety points for BBQ cooking

Ensure personnel involved in cooking food are competent and understand food safety principles.

Be prepared and light the BBQ well in advance and wait until the charcoal is glowing red, with a powdery grey surface, before you start to cook.

Remember raw meat and poultry is likely contain food poisoning bacteria and must not be allowed to touch food that has already been cooked or is ready-to-eat (such as salads and burger buns).

Do not use plates, utensils etc. that have touched raw meats and poultry for cooked/ready-to-eat foods.

Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before food preparation and after touching raw meat and poultry and before you handle ready-to-eat food.

Keep food covered and chilled until you are ready to cook on the BBQ.

Keep raw meats and poultry separate from salads and ready-to eat foods at all times.

Never wash raw chicken or any other meat. Washing raw meat and poultry risks splashing germs onto your hands, utensils, and worktops.

Do not allow raw meat and poultry to touch partially or fully cooked food on the grill.

Ensure foods are piping hot all the way through to the centre of the thickest part with no pinkness remaining and juices run clear. The use of a disinfected probe thermometer is recommended.

Ensure the food is turned regularly and moved around the barbecue to cook it evenly. Charred does not mean thoroughly cooked. Even if meat/poultry is burnt on the outside, it might not be cooked properly on the inside. **Never rely on guesswork, if unsure, cut the food open or use a probe thermometer, and if there is any doubt, do not serve or consume it.** If cooking for large numbers of people, consider cooking chicken and pork in the oven first then finish on the BBQ for added flavour. However, pre-cooked foods must be stored correctly and safely under temperature control before being finished off on the BBQ.

Never reuse a sauce or marinade which has already been put on raw meat, with cooked or ready-to-eat food.

Have sufficient and suitable utensils containers available to ensure that the same ones are not used for raw and ready-to-eat foods.

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold and where necessary covered. Throw leftovers away and never reheat.

**Note:** Anyone involved in preparing or cooking food must have an appreciation of Food Safety principles and apply the highest standards of practice. Ideally, they should hold Level 2 Food Safety training, and at the very least, they should read this leaflet.

### General Safety (not food safety)

It is advisable for the person(s) cooking not to drink alcohol as this may affect their judgment.

To light charcoal, always use proper BBQ lighter fuel or self-igniting charcoal; never use petrol or other inflammable liquids to try and start the BBQ. If using gas, check joints for leaks with soapy water before use.

Ensure that the grill is lit immediately, if the grill fails to light at first or second attempt, turn off gas immediately and leave for a few minutes before relighting.

Position BBQs on level ground, well away from fences, hedges and trees, or anything that could catch fire. Keep children and animals well away from the BBQ.

Ensure games or activities such as rounders, frisbee, football or cricket take place well away from the BBQ.

Once lit, never leave a BBQ unattended. Never attempt to move a lit BBQ. Remember BBQ's can be dangerous, the grill is hot and can cause nasty burns, or even serious fires if knocked over.

Take care when cooking fatty foods as fat drips onto the coals which may flare up.

Keep a fire blanket, bucket of water, sand, or a hose/water sprayer close by in case of accidents.

Ensure the charcoal is cold or the gas securely is turned off or disconnected before leaving the site. When using a gas BBQ, turn off the cylinder before the BBQ controls to ensure any residual gas in the pipeline is used up.

### Further Information

University Fire Safety Team [UniversityFireSafety@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:UniversityFireSafety@admin.cam.ac.uk)

On the Food Standards Agency website [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)

In other leaflets in the food safety information series

From Nick White, Head of University Catering or Jenny Clare, Food Safety Compliance Manager