
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Summer is here and the time is right for safety when you eat

GRAND RAPIDS – The smell of the grill on a warm evening is one of the most iconic memories of summer. The Kent County Health Department wants to make sure those memories remain pleasant by avoiding foodborne illness. Following safe steps in food handling, cooking, and storage are essential. In every step of food preparation, follow these four guidelines to keep food safe.

Separate:

Separate meats from foods that are to be eaten raw, such as produce, in your grocery cart, at the checkout, and in your refrigerator. Keep raw meats in sealed plastic bags or other sealed containers to keep juices from potentially leaking onto other foods. In the refrigerator meat should always be stored **BELOW** produce to avoid leakage.

Clean:

Wash your hands with warm soapy water for 20 seconds before you touch any food and after you touch any raw meat. Use hot soapy water and paper towel to clean surfaces. Never re-use knives or cutting boards without washing them first. Sanitize all knives, cutting boards, counters and anything else that comes into contact with raw meat by using an antibacterial cleaner (or a solution of 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 gallon of water).

Cook:

Cook all food to these minimum internal temperatures as measured with a food thermometer, you may choose to cook food to higher temperatures.

- 145 F – Fish and Shellfish
- 145 F - Beef, Pork Veal and Lamb (steaks, chops, roasts) allow to rest for 3 minutes
- 160 F – ALL ground meats except poultry
- 165 F – ALL Poultry (breasts, whole bird, legs, thighs, wings, ground poultry, and stuffing)
- 165 F – Casseroles AND Leftovers

Always place food on a **CLEAN** plate after cooking. Use caution with marinades. Meat should marinate in the refrigerator, and any unused portion should be discarded after contact with raw meat.

Chill:

Refrigerate or freeze foods as soon as possible. Bacteria needs time, food and moisture to grow, but it cannot grow below 40 F or above 135 F. Keeping food out of the "Danger Zone" can truly be a lifesaver. Foods that require refrigeration should not be kept out for more than two hours (one hour if air temperature is over 80 F). Use a thermometer to ensure your refrigerator is storing food at 40 F.

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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