



Food Safety for Campus Events



A guide to keeping foods safe before, during and after an event.

Foodborne illnesses are dangerous. A fun event can have a horrible outcome if steps are not taken to ensure the food is handled properly before and during the event. Even the leftovers could possibly make someone very sick if the food has been mishandled.

The enclosed information is designed to be a brief overview of some key steps that if practiced will prevent many forms of foodborne illnesses. There are no guarantees as food safety has to begin with the food source, but correct handling can prevent and in many cases eliminate some forms of bacteria and the spread of viruses that could otherwise cause illnesses.

On campus, all University Dining Services' managers and key employees are certified in food safety. Extensive systems are in place for taking and maintaining temperatures, receiving, storage, preparation and service that ensure the food we serve is safe. For more detailed information refer to the resources listed below. www.vdh.virginia.gov/EnvironmentalHealth/Food/FoodSafety or www.fda.gov

Start off Clean

Dangerous bacteria and viruses can be transmitted easily from people cooking and serving food, dirty equipment and from raw food contaminating ready to eat food.

- **Wash your hands**

Frequent hand washing with hot water (100°) and soap for 15-20 seconds is the best defense from bacteria and viruses that can make you and other people sick. **Hand Antiseptics do not ever replace a thorough hand washing and do not remove many dangerous pathogens from your hands.** When working with food always wash your hands:

- Before you begin
- After using the rest room
- Before and after handling raw meat
- Whenever handling chemicals that may contaminate food
- After sneezing or coughing
- Touching anything that may contaminate food

- **Wash your equipment**

Cutting boards, counter tops, tables, utensils and coolers might look clean but may contain dangerous levels of bacteria. Wash with hot soapy water and rinse thoroughly before and after each use.

- **Thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables** under cold running water including the outer peels and rind of melons and hard skin fruit before slicing.

Be Equipped for Safe Food

Most cases of foodborne illness are caused by high risk foods being time and temperature abused by being:

- Cooked to the wrong temperature
- Held at the wrong temperature
- Cooled or reheated incorrectly

Be prepared to keep your **hot food hot** and your **cold food cold** whether it's for a picnic or a catered dinner.

On your checklist for your event be sure to add the following;

Coolers

Plenty of ice

Set salads or condiments made from high risk foods into disposable pans with a layer ice to keep chilled for service.

Diposable Chafers (available at most party goods stores) **with sterno**

Clean utensils

Cleaning cloths and soapy water

Bimetallic Food Thermometer is the only way to know that the temperature of your food is safe:



Prevent Cross Contamination

Bacteria can multiply and be transferred from soiled equipment such as coolers, cutting boards, cleaning cloths and utensils that have not been properly washed and sanitized after each use.

- **Don't reuse cutting boards, counters, tables, and utensils after handling raw meat & poultry.** Wash and sanitize thoroughly before re-using.
- **Store raw meats & poultry separate from ready to eat salads, fruits, vegetables.** Use separate coolers if refrigeration is not available.
- **Keep chemicals stored separately from food and never use cleaning supply buckets or bottles to store food.**

Food Safety Checklist

1. Start with clean hands, equipment and work surfaces and keep it clean throughout the event.
2. Never thaw food at room temperature. Thaw in a refrigerator, by microwave, under cold running water or as part of the cooking process (such as using frozen burgers).
3. Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw or cooked meats and ready to eat foods.
4. Keep high risk foods refrigerated until ready to cook or eat.
5. In the refrigerator, store raw meats below ready to eat food such as fresh salads and vegetables. Use a separate cooler for raw meats if a refrigerator is not available.
6. Do not overload your cooler or refrigerator. Keep cold foods cold. Store food in the refrigerator (40° F or below) or freezer (0° F or below).
7. Cook food to safe internal temperatures (see the Safe Cooking Temperatures chart on the right). Use a food thermometer to check.
8. Keep hot foods hot. Maintain hot cooked food at 140° F or above.
9. Reheat cooked food to 165° F
10. If using a microwave to re-heat or cook food, use small batches, rotate and cook to 165° F.
11. Don't leave food out at room temperature for more than 2 hours or less on a hot day at a picnic
12. After the event, cool down food in small batches. For soups and chili try setting small containers of hot chili or soup in pans of ice before putting in the refrigerator.
13. Handle leftovers carefully. **If in doubt, throw it out.** If you feel like a product has been exposed to dangerous temperatures, don't take a chance, dispose of it.

