



NEWS RELEASE

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Department of Health Offers Tips to Prevent Foodborne Illnesses This Summer *New Foodborne Prevention and Reporting Website Launched*

BISMARCK, N.D. – Proper handling and preparation of food can help prevent foodborne illnesses, according to Julie Goplin, foodborne surveillance epidemiologist with the North Dakota Department of Health.

“Summertime is when many people enjoy backyard barbecues, picnics or dinners around a campfire,” Goplin said. “Unfortunately, the incidences of infections associated with foodborne illnesses increase in the summer because of improperly handled food.”

Improper handling and cooking of poultry products and ground beef are common sources of foodborne illnesses such as salmonella, campylobacter and *E. coli*. These diseases can cause diarrhea, bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramping, nausea and vomiting. Young children and the elderly are at greatest risk for severe illness such as dehydration, infection in the blood and kidney failure. Diseases such as norovirus, shigella and *E. coli*, in addition to being foodborne, also can be easily spread in contaminated water and from direct contact with infected people.

The following tips can help keep summertime food safe:

- Always wash your hands before preparing food, after handling raw foods and before eating. If warm, running water and soap are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep cold foods – such as sliced fruits and vegetables, cold salads and meat trays – cold. During summer picnics, it is important to pack a refrigerator thermometer in your cooler to ensure the food in the cooler is kept at 40 degrees F or below.
- Cook foods properly. Cook meat to proper internal temperatures.
 - Poultry breasts to 165 degrees F.
 - Ground beef to 155 degrees F.
 - Pork and fish to 145 degrees F.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before slicing and serving.

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- Use pasteurized egg products for items not cooked thoroughly, such as homemade ice cream and raw cookie dough.
- Avoid drinking unpasteurized milk.
- People diagnosed with foodborne illness may be excluded from swimming, working as a food handler, working in health care or attending day care. Consult with a physician or your local public health department for more information.

Anybody who experiences symptoms of a foodborne illness should contact his or her physician; anyone who experiences bloody diarrhea should contact his or her physician immediately.

The North Dakota Department of Health recently launched a new web page that includes information about foodborne illnesses. For more information or to report a possible foodborne illness, visit www.ndhealth.gov/disease/GI/ or contact Julie Goplin, North Dakota Department of Health, at 800.472.2180.

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