

Potluck Food Safety

Everyone enjoys potluck get-togethers. You get to try all kinds of delicious foods, and you only have to bring one dish. Therein lurks the hidden danger. With so many people preparing so many different foods, everyone needs to do their part to help prevent a foodborne illness outbreak. Here are a few food safety tips to make sure our next potluck only leaves everyone well fed and happy.

Proper Handwashing



The number one way food borne illnesses are spread is by people not washing their hands before they handle food. Proper hand washing involves using soap and warm water, and scrubbing your hands together for at least 10-15 seconds.

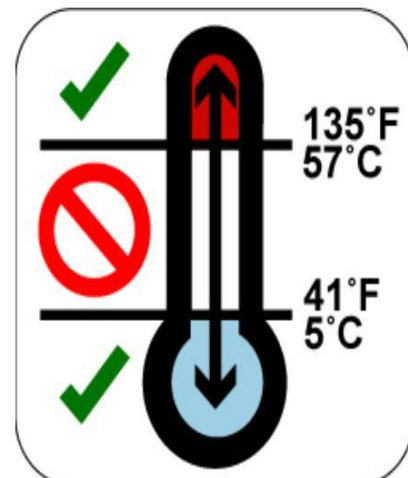
Make sure you wash your hands after:

- ◆ Using the restroom
- ◆ Handling raw meat or eggs
- ◆ Touching your hair or face
- ◆ Sneezing or coughing
- ◆ Touching anything that may contaminate your hands

Time & Temperature

You have to control both time and temperature to make sure food stays safe. When preparing or serving food for a potluck, make sure you:

- ◆ Keep food refrigerated at or below 41°F until ready to be served.
- ◆ Make sure perishable foods are not left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- ◆ If possible, keep cold perishable foods on ice while they're being served to keep them cold.
- ◆ Keep hot foods at 135°F or hotter in a crock pot or some other type of warmer during the potluck.



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Cooking and Cross-Contamination

Handle raw foods with care to ensure raw foods and ready-to-eat foods are always kept separated to prevent cross-contamination.

Getting raw meat juice or raw egg on other foods is a sure way to make someone sick.

Use separate cutting boards and separate utensils when you are preparing raw foods. If you don't have extras available, make sure you prepare the ready-to-eat foods first, and at least wash, rinse and sanitize the utensils that come into contact with the raw foods.

Using a thermometer, make sure all raw foods are thoroughly cooked to ensure all bacteria in these foods are killed:

- ◆ Eggs, fish, and whole pieces of meat including beef, lamb, and pork - 145°F
- ◆ Ground up meats like sausages or hamburgers - 155°F
- ◆ Poultry like chicken or turkey, and foods that are stuffed - 165°F

Personal Health

We've all been there. We need to bring a dish to the potluck but we don't even want to go ourselves because we're sick. In fact, it was difficult to get away from the bathroom long enough just to be able to prepare the dish at all. If you ever find yourself in this situation,

NO NOT prepare food for the potluck. When

someone preparing food is sick with a gastro-

intestinal illness, or even a cold, they will unintentionally contaminate the food and spread their illness to all who eat it. Do not prepare food for other people if you are sick. Let's all stay well.

