



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

Dana Olzenak McGuire, PT, PhD ■ Public Health Director
80 State Highway 310, Suite 2 ■ Canton, New York 13617-1476
Phone: (315) 386-2325 ■ Fax: (315) 386-2203

Press Release

Date: July 2nd, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: 315-386-2325

Stay “Food Safe” this July 4th

Canton, NY— Many St. Lawrence County residents will be celebrating the Fourth of July this year — a little differently – with celebrations at home, including backyard barbecues and picnics perhaps with only your own household members. No matter how you’re celebrating the Fourth of July, St. Lawrence County Public Health Department and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) encourage you to make food safety and other public health recommendations a part of your celebration.

“Foodborne illness can increase during summer because of the warmer temperatures and extended time spent outside,” said Dr. Mindy Brashears, the USDA’s Under Secretary for Food Safety. “You may not be grilling at the park this year, but instead you may be grilling at home. As we celebrate this Fourth of July holiday, I encourage consumers to use food safety steps to reduce their risk of illness.”

Follow these tips from St. Lawrence County Public Health and USDA to ensure a food safe Fourth of July:

- 1) **Wash Your Hands.** Wash hands before, during, and after you prepare a meal, especially after handling raw meat, poultry, seafood or eggs. Hands can move germs that can cause illness found in raw meat and poultry, around the area you are preparing food, which can lead to foodborne illness. Washing hands often, with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, is one of the best ways to stop the spread of harmful germs.
- 2) **Don’t Cross-Contaminate.** Always keep raw meat and their juices from touching other foods. While grilling, avoid using the same utensils that can come into contact with raw meat or poultry with ready-to-eat foods. Wash and sanitize all surfaces and utensils after they touch raw items. Bring enough tools to keep your raw meat and poultry away from any cooked or ready-to-eat foods and have extra cleaning and sanitizing supplies ready for your surfaces, plates and utensils.
- 3) **Use a Food Thermometer.** Some grill masters may say they know their food is done just by looking at its color when it comes off the grill. That’s not possible and shouldn’t be relied upon. Although grilled foods may look done, foodborne illness causing germs are not killed until the safe internal temperature has been reached. Use a food thermometer to know when your food is safe to eat:

The USDA recommended safe minimum internal temperatures are:

- Beef, pork, lamb and veal: 145°F with a three-minute rest time
- Fish: 145°F
- Ground meats (beef, pork, lamb and veal): 160°F

- Whole poultry, poultry breasts and ground poultry: 165°F
- 4) **Keep Foods at a Safe Temperature.** Perishable food items, leftovers from the grill, cold salads, and even cut fruits and vegetables should not be left outside for more than two hours, and only one hour if the temperature is at or above 90°F. Bacteria grow most rapidly in the range of temperatures between 40°F and 140°F, doubling in number in as little as 20 minutes. Keep your food at or below 40°F in coolers or containers with a cold source, such as ice or gel packs. This will prevent harmful bacteria from growing.

If you have questions about these tips, or any other food safety topics, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) or chat live at ask.usda.gov from 10 a.m. to 6p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

St. Lawrence County continues to work on reducing the spread of COVID-19 and reminds county residents to: wear a face covering in public, practice social distancing, wash hands frequently, monitor your health, and stay home if you are sick. For questions or more information regarding COVID-19, please call the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department at 315-386-2325.

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